



Bhagawan and myself

C. R. Rajeswaran

The background of the entire page is a soft, light pink color with a large, out-of-focus rose in the center. In the top left corner, there is a smaller, more detailed pink rose.

Bhagawan and myself

Dedicated to the lotus of our
Lord Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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“ I have never asked any one to worship me. Those who have faith in me may come to me – those who do not have faith in me may not come to me.

Those who have full faith in me have good experiences in their lives.

When I materialized idols, pictures, rings, chains and so on to my devotees they must know my divine power. I only have the power to do anything - I do not give any human being any of my powers. My powers are divine. Do not compare to magic.

I perform my miracles around the world. As years go on my miracles will also increase. Materialization of Viboothi in many colours, kumkum, sandalwood powder and honey are happening around the world.

Embodiments of love experience it. I even write my messages to my devotees, personally or publicly. Messages are no magic. This is a sort of interview. There are some of you who say that other devotees are closer to me or that they are special to me. There is no special child or no one is closer to me. All of you are my children and all of you are closer to me.

Embodiments of love never think miracles are magic. Experience all miracles you will find peace of mind.”

Thought for the day

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Foreword

In the Kaliyuga Age the coming of Sai Avathar is a very significant event. This has resulted in several millions of people from all over the world being attracted to Puttaparthi like a magnetic force to get Swami's Dharsan. He shows His love to all His devotees by way of Leelas or miracles. The miracles He performs, His visits to save people in distress, His Educare services, His Medicare services and His Seva to mankind, all refer to the Avatar's love towards living beings.

Sai Baba's visits to the homes of Devotees are a very striking feature. The author of this book 'Bhagavan and myself' narrates his experiences about Swami's miracles in the house where he lives in Colombo, Sri Lanka - and how He gradually transformed the home into a Sai Prayer Centre. Baba not only gave happiness to all by naming it as "**Sai Malar Centre**", but took one of the rooms for His sole occupation.

The title of this book itself was prompted by Swami. Joy Thomas in her book "Life is Love enjoy it" also says that Swami spelt out the title of her book and gave her the liberty in choosing the titles of the chapters of her book.

Guidance had been given in writing by Swami to invite only those devotees as approved by Him to hold bajans on days fixed by Him at the centre. The fragrance indicating His presence shows the love He has towards those who visit the Centre. The thought for the day as given by Swami on every bajan day is read out to the devotees to direct and guide them in life.

On special days Swami materializes viboothi, vermillion, sandalwood powder, amrith and several statuattes and directs that - certain statuettes be distributed to the devotees.

The author refers to the 'growing' of garlands placed around a picture of Swami by one of the devotee's at an accommodation centre at Puttaparthi and the devotees being amazed, similar incidents have taken place at Sai Malar Centre. I am personally aware of an instance when I took a jasmine garland to the centre and the next day this garland around the picture of Swami had grown and reached the outer door. Many are Swami's ways.

Another feature of importance is the appearance at the Centre of Shreya and Bharath – the inseparable sister and brother. Swami 'communicates' with some of His devotees through them and leaves messages and letters on private matters to His devotees. Sakunthala Balu in her book "Living Divinity" says that letters falling from photographs of Sri Sathya Sai Baba is a "phenomenon beyond comparison".

This book makes interesting reading and adds to the series on Swami's miracles – His 'visiting card' to the devotees. The book has been written under Swami's guidance and shows Swami's love, kindness and concern to man and indicates the purpose of His avatar hood. Let us place it at His Lotus Feet and pray for His Blessings.

Om Sri Sai Ram.

Vidya Venkat

Denver, Colorado

USA

August, 2008

Acknowledgements

Koti Pranams at the divine lotus feet of our dearest Bhagwan Sri Sathya Sai Baba at whose command I have written my experiences in this book and His blessing for my humble presentation of His miracles.

I am thankful to Mr. Ratnavadivel and Jai Kumar Sharma (Maharaji) the two priests at the Sindhi Sai Bajan Center in Colombo and to the late Mr. Sivanayagam, President of the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Center of Colombo under whose guidance and opportunities given I began to expand my spiritual consciousness.

I am grateful to those devotees who attend Sai Malar Center and those whose houses I have visited in India for permitting me to relate their experiences with Swami in this book.

I am very thankful to Ms. Anita de Silva for her untiring hard work in typing out the copies of the manuscript of this book. Her involvement in typing out the manuscript is itself a miracle. She was a colleague of mine in my work place and I had lost contact with her after leaving my work place. When the time had come for typing the hand written manuscripts, I was looking out for her help. By this time she had also left the work place and was living out of the city. Having made inquiries I drew a blank and was wondering whose services I should now obtain. That very day at a shopping mall in the city, she was standing in the queue at the cashier's counter. This was most unexpected and I requested her help to complete the typing and she readily volunteered.

Gracious thanks to Sai sister Vidya Venkat for agreeing to write out the Foreword to this book despite her other important engagements.

I sincerely thank Sai sister Vijeyaluxshmi Jegarasasingham and Mr. M. G. Perera of her Ministry office for the long hours they spent in editing this book and Professor Yoga Rasanayagam for the indispensable final review of the manuscript.

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C. R. Rajeswaran

Colombo,
Sri Lanka.
November 2008.

Om Sai Ram

Introduction

Little over a year ago there was a written message for me on our shrine room notice board.

The message read 'I want you to write a book of your experiences with Swami and title it' "**Bhagawan and myself**".

Before beginning to pen my experiences over the years, I need to explain to the readers what is meant by 'written messages.' In this book I have often used words such as, 'messages, directions, instructions etc.' These words necessarily mean the directions, messages and instructions which initially appeared on the doors in our house written in viboothi mixed with water which continue to appear on a white board written thereon with marker pens provided at Swami's request.

This was then to be the seed that was sown in my mind to author a book which would reveal for the first time the experiences we have had with swami in our home.

I have never been an author and I never wished to be one. The farthest I had reached in this field was in compiling and editing a fortnightly bulletin titled "Geographica" in my college. This bulletin never contained articles on spiritual subjects but instead it contained articles written by students of Geography in the pre – university classes and was meant merely for circulation in the college itself. The incidents I relate in this book are not dreams of wild fantasy nor are they fictions of my imagination. Readers would perhaps feel that this book is more a collection of miraculous happenings.

Although I was highly elated at the thought of writing a book and to thereby share my experiences with other devotees, yet

I realized that I had an uphill task. Nevertheless I was thankful and happy for the opportunity given to me by Swami. I wondered how I could find the money to have the book printed. What transpired in my mind at that time was perhaps the answer to the question which was as though it was Swami who said that I had got my share of the compensation money from courts. Since I had thought of gifting the money to the Sathya Sai Trust, I have now an opportunity to do so by publishing the book.

In any event prior to Swami's message and the materialization of viboothi I had begun writing down the experiences which occurred far apart from one another, in a note book. This however was not to be for long. As more and more miracles began to occur and also due to the weekly work connected with Bajans, I could not write down in detail all the experiences for want of time. I had to be content with noting down my experiences in a sketchy manner due to the frequency of events.

Many months had passed since I had slowed down in writing out the experiences even in the sketchy manner, Swami was not about to relent on His direction to me and He once again quite subtly asked me how far I had proceeded with the writing of the book. Swami certainly had no intention in publicizing His miracles through me but I strongly believed that He was testing my faith in directing me to write the book.

I prayed to Swami and requested Him to give me courage to begin writing the book. After all when Swami Himself has willed, is there anything that is impossible?

Swami, how else can a privilege be extended to me to write a book on your miracles in our house. You are the Lord, strange are the ways in which you perform your miracles.

There is an abundance of literature on Bhagawan written by devotees from many parts of the world. I have in this book

confined myself to our experiences of Swami in our home spiced with parallel experiences which we have personally witnessed in the homes of a few devotees living abroad laced with some quotations from the discourses given by Swami.

In this book, while sharing with devotees our experiences, I have withheld a number of incidents both experienced by us and certain devotees in our home for personal reasons.

Lord, forgive me if I have disclosed too much or refrained from disclosing certain incidents which you had willed that I should have, I am merely an instrument of yours in performing this task.

I fervently hope that the devotees who read this book will derive much happiness as it has given us in experiencing the Sai miracles.

Om Sri Sai Ram

- C.R. Rajeswaran

CHAPTER 1

The Beginnings

I must admit that I never had any faith in Sai Baba. In the year 1990 the name Sai Baba became more familiar to me. It was during this year that almost everyday we received in the mail the most dreaded chain letters in the name of Sai Baba. These letters contained frightful consequences if one did not act on its terms. So much so I began hating this so called miracle man Sai Baba. To show my anger and disgust I torched all the chain letters I received to ashes and pleaded for protection from the deities whom I worshipped.

If such letters cause one pain of mind why should we cause pain of mind by copying these letters to ten or twenty others and thereby incur their wrath and their curses? I was reminded of the Biblical saying “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you”

I do not concur with the view that writing chain letters is the way to coax the recipient of such letters to develop faith. Some of these letters spell the worst forms of doom to the recipient and his family should they be ignored and not answered within the required number of days as contained in the letters. If of course one complies with the contents of the letters, such letters hold out promises of boon and wealth. These letters come in the name of almost every God, Saint and Lord. In my case it came in the name of Sai Baba. Such letters cause immense pain of mind and do psychologically upset the recipients for if anything untoward should occur during the period such letters are received and are ignored then tongues would wag to say that the calamity occurred for the reason that the letter had been ignored.

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The frequency of these dreaded letters I received gathered momentum as time went by and I had begun to lose patience to tolerate any more such letters. If ever I saw a picture of Sai Baba or some body who called him self a devotee of Sai Baba I would turn away. To me Sai Baba was another human being with powers to perform mysterious events and hence developed an aversion towards even persons who were His followers and refused to have anything to do with them.

I had seen people having photographs of His feet along with His photographs. They called these feet, the lotus feet and offered flowers to it and worshipped them. How could anyone say that Sai Baba's feet are divine? In the first instance one should accept Him as a divine power before worshipping His divine feet. To those who did not think that He is divinity incarnate, the most sought after ‘Paada Namaskar’ by His devotees was a farce.

My mother had heard about the God man Sai Baba from her friends who were devotees of Sai Baba. She was given copies of literature of Sai Baba by them which she would surreptitiously smuggle into her room to read lest she annoyed me if she read them in my presence. She had become a part time devotee and was half way as to whether to believe or not the miracles of Sai Baba. Sai Baba has said, that miracles are His ‘visiting cards’ and by performing them He makes devotees to first believe Him and then follow His teachings.

My sister's family had already settled in Salem (South India) after the ethnic riots of 1983 to enable her to educate her children. While my mother was visiting my sister in India in 1992, the topic of Sai Baba had cropped up at a discussion in my sister's family and my niece and my mother had decided to go to Puttaparthi on an experimental mission to satisfy their curiosity. My sister was infact an ardent follower of another Guru as she still is and perhaps had not much faith in Sai Baba.

As I later learnt from my mother this journey to Puttaparthi happened to be on the eve of Sai Baba's Birthday Celebrations and the Ashram was teeming with thousands of devotees. In preparation for the Birthday the place was a hive of activity and every detail was being looked into meticulously by the sevadals.

Apparently my mother and niece had no place to stay over at the Ashram and had to be content with staying in a small room in a hotel outside the Ashram. They were fortunate to have had this accommodation as even the lodges outside the Ashram were full to capacity.

After my mother returned to Sri Lanka from her vacation in India she appeared a bit brainwashed and I noticed a slight change in her opinion of Sai Baba for the better.

Then came the event in the following year which was to later drastically change my own views of Sai Baba.

In November of that year the annual Balvikas program (a cultural program by young aspirants of Sai Baba) was being staged in a large hall in Colombo preceding the Birthday Celebrations of Sai Baba. Having heard about this occasion from devotees, my mother requested me to take her for this function. I stood my ground and just refused to accompany her as it was a waste of time. After much persuasion I made a deal with her and that was to let her sit in the front seats in the hall with my family and I was to sit in the last row of seats as I was certainly not interested in the proceedings or in Sai Baba.

On our way for the occasion I had to change some money and decided that the best way to do so was to purchase a few consumer items to induce the shop keeper to change the money.

During the programme it rained heavily and after the programme was over we went to the car and opened the door. I observed that of the four items I had purchased one was missing. We

looked all over, inside and outside the vehicle but could not trace the missing item of grocery. I was sure as was my family that I had placed all four items on the seat and locked the doors properly. My spirits fell. How could anyone pilfer only that item? The other items were more costly than the one that was missing. Why only that particular item was stolen if at all and by whom?

Fear gripped me and I began to tremble. A doubt was lurking in my mind as to whether it could it be Sai Baba's handiwork?

Ever since then some unexplainable incidents occurred. In order not to make this chapter long, I have narrated these incidents under other chapters in this book.

These incidents began to make me take the first step towards being convinced that Sai Baba was behind all these happenings though I did not openly admit this fact to my mother.

I felt that I was being helplessly drawn into Sai Baba's fold like a person being carried away by the surging waters in the river.

I had begun to relent little by little in my attitude towards Sai Baba and the patches of doubts I had in my mind were moving away.

Some force was pushing me towards attending Bajans at the closest center. The bajans were soul stirring. I began liking the rhythm and the songs which were being sung by some of the most melodious voices of Sai devotees, in unison with other devotees providing the chorus and rhythmic clapping to the accompaniment of musical instruments. The more I heard these bajans more was the desire to attend the bajans frequently.

I would feel miserable if I could not attend the weekly bajans at the center which was held on Thursdays. During this period I became aware that there were other centres which held bajans on other days of the week. Distance from my house to these centers did not matter to me and we began attending these bajans as well, for the spiritual vibrations caused by these bajans cast great happiness in us.

This center's activities were conducted by Maharaji and Mr. Ratnavadivel two devoted gentlemen of whom more will be said later.

Mr. Ratnavadivel was observant of the devotees who attend Bajans at the Centre and has been perhaps observing me at the bajans for sometime and having known that I was a new comer to the center once asked me if I could attend to some service at the center. I gladly acceded to this request. The service he wanted me to perform was to polish the brass trisool (Trident) bathe the Trisool in milk, apply sandal wood paste and kumkum (vermillion powder) every Tuesday morning.

I am a devotee of Shakthi, my favourite deity and most pictures or statues of Shakthi are seen with the trident in her hand. This brass trisool had been implanted at the center at the place where some Maharishis from India had performed a non-stop Homam ceremony for many days, many years ago. Was it not a strange coincidence that this particular duty should have been cast on me?

Although time was limited on weekdays, with chores of other work, I believe Sai Baba found time for me to attend to this work and also be in my work place comfortably before 9.00 a.m.

I performed this service for a few years until "**The coming**" of Sai Baba to our humble home.

Slowly but surely Sai Baba who by this time I had begun to revere and adore as "Bhagawan" and "Swami" with respect was working His way into me. The ways of Bhagawan are inscrutable.

The seeds of faith had begun to germinate which later developed into an unshakable faith through many more incidents to be narrated. After swami entered our lives there was indeed an inner transformation in each one of us, and we were gradually changing from living a conventional life to a life based on spiritual values.

A devotee once gave me a book on the life story of Swami, the contents of which had a terrific impact on me. I began to interest myself in reading more books on Swami by several devotees including many foreigners. Mr. Ratnavadivel too gave me some books from his collection. I had a few years ago the opportunity to view a beautiful video film on the life of Shiridi Baba and Sri Sathya Sai Baba. This film left a deep impression in our minds. In fact I had seen this film many times later on. The turbulent times these two great Masters had undergone in their childhood would melt the hearts of anyone who would view this film.

On every occasion I had been to Puttaparthi, I did not fail to purchase the latest book on Swami on the shelves in the bookstall at Prashanthi Nilayam. Swami had drawn me to His lotus feet at a time when my mind was in deep turmoil with my sisters and brother having settled in foreign countries, I had none to seek solace in the days following my mother's tragic demise. The only silver ray was that of Swami and after my first visit to the bajan centre it became my regular habit to attend the bajans every Thursday and on Saturdays and Sundays at other centers. Slowly the fear of being alone began to vanish. Our story of transformation, I am sure would not be different from that of hundreds of others.

Swami's entry into our home was a water shed in our spiritual journey and filled our lives with cheer and happiness which otherwise would have been miserable. In retrospect I had at first come to scoff but had changed course to pray to swami and now there is no turning back.

C H A P T E R 2

Incidents Prior to the Appearances of Holy Ash

In this chapter let me narrate more incidents which marked the turning point in our lives as followers of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. These incidents occurred at the initial stages when we were at cross roads whether or not to believe the mysterious occurrences prior to the year 2000.

Sometime in January 1995, I was driving with my daughter after her class back home. An ash coloured wagon which came behind me at a terrific speed overtook my car on the left hand side. There was a thud and I felt that the wagon had hit the left front side of my car. The wagon did not stop but drove off at high speed. I alighted from my car to ascertain the extent of damage to my vehicle and found at the spot where the accident had occurred a piece of the fender which I guessed belonged to the other vehicle. Though my daughter noted the registration number of the wagon, we had a hunch that it was incorrect as the wagon had sped off before we could have a second look at the registration plate.

At the Police Station the Police Officer recorded our statement and we informed him that the registration number of the offending vehicle could be incorrect. This was causing us a bit of worry. Driving out of the police station on to the main road, we saw a grey coloured wagon coming up a by lane similar to the one which damaged our vehicle. A quick glance at the fenders, confirmed that it was the same wagon for the wagon had only the balance portion of

the fender. This time however we were able to note down the number correctly. The difference being that my daughter had in her hurry interchanged two digits of the registration plate. We were able to correct our statement at the Police Station. The Police thereafter apprehended the offending driver and had him charged in a court of law. By Swami's grace we were able to have the driver pay for the damage to my car.

On a working day in January, I was driving my vehicle to office; I gave way to a truck wanting to turn on to the main highway. There were other vehicles which had stalled behind my vehicle. When the truck had turned, I moved forward, as I did so there was a loud crash. A wagon coming up from a cross road on the left and hidden from my view by the truck crashed into my car.

The driver of the wagon though clearly at fault was not willing to admit. Since there was no admission of his fault I decided to phone the traffic police. At that time my thought was about my friend, the police officer in charge of the traffic division. But then this accident occurred in an area outside his jurisdiction. How could he help? I had to therefore call the emergency police to convey a message to the traffic police of the area. As I concluded the call, there was my friend who had not seen me, but having marked the position of the two vehicles on the ground while coming up to us recognized me and instructed me to proceed to the police station of the area. At the police station, the officer informed me that my friend had already called him on the mobile phone. My friend later told me that he had been proceeding to his office at that time and had seen the traffic jam caused by the accident and to clear the high way he had marked the position of the two vehicles on the ground.

Though I needed to await the arrival of the wagon driver, at the police station, he did not turn up. I was then asked to record my statement and proceed to my office and the police said they would prosecute the driver of the wagon.

We believed it was Swami, the ocean of compassion who had sent my friend to help me

In the same year, we had visited India for a tour of the Holy shrines. We arrived in Thiruchendur, a holy shrine dedicated to Lord Muruga on the south eastern sea front of India. It is a beautiful and an ancient shrine. This is one of the six houses of Lord Muruga, and it is said in the epics that the Lord defeated and killed a demon named Soorapadma who had tormented earthly beings at the site this temple now stands.

Having arrived at this temple, from Kanniyakumari (Cape Comorin) tired and weary we looked out for a place where our baggage could be left till we returned from the temple prior to leaving on an overnight journey to Madras that evening.

Thiruchendur being a small town, hardly had any hotels, however, we located a small hotel which was under renovation. The Hotel owner permitted us to have a room on the third floor, it was dusty, yet there was no choice but to occupy it for a few hours.

Coming up the stairs to the room after prayers at the temple on that hot humid afternoon, I saw a pocket size picture of swami on the stairway. This picture was of Swami with one hand raised as though He was blessing and had a charming smile. That smile seemed to say “you will be a devotee soon” (see picture on the cover- river Chittravathi is in the background). At this point of time, I was never a firm believer of swami. I picked up the picture and was about to place it alongside the wall when something prompted me to keep the picture. It was an old picture but nevertheless I obeyed the command coming from within me. I placed the picture in my purse and it occurred to me that I had not yet had Swami’s darshan. A thought flashed through my mind. Was this then a sign that Swami wanted us to come to Puttaparthi? Incidentally it is an identical picture (larger copy) from which holy ash began materializing in later years in our home.

In the year 1997 Swami’s birthday celebrations were being conducted in a large Auditorium at the Colombo Sai center. I was just recovering from the physical injuries I had sustained in the coach accident in Madurai and to keep my mind at ease I decided to attend the celebrations. Somebody who came home that morning gave us a bunch of blue lotus flowers. I took these flowers as an offering for Swami hoping that His large picture placed in the hall would be adorned with them. To my disappointment the flowers were not used for the purpose that I had wished for. There were nearly a thousand devotees and the hall was packed to capacity. There were renowned educationalists, professionals, people of eminence and long time devotees in the hall. After the bajan the President of the center addressed the large gathering and concluding his speech invited five devotees by name from the audience to cut Swami’s birthday cake. The President I thought had called out my name as well, but then I thought I had heard him wrong or that he was calling another devotee by the same name. The President was looking in my direction and pointing his fingers gestured. I turned to look behind me for I never imagined that I would be summoned until he said “you come up”. I was quite taken aback at the privilege given to cut the birthday cake and to my surprise I discovered the blue lotus flowers I had taken, all lined up along the border of the huge cake and I offered my prayers of gratitude to Swami.

Monday the eighth of June 1998 still remains in my memory as one of the most dreadful days of my life. Naturally and consistently I had as usual woken up in the wee hours of the morning and went into the bath. As I opened the hot water geyser tap I noticed that the flow of water from it was very weak. Hence I attempted to open the inlet tap leading to the geyser and I suddenly felt a strong electric current passing through my right arm and leg. I panicked as the bathroom floor was wet and the bath door was secured from inside. Nevertheless I decided that there was no other way but to try and pull my hand away from the tap with all my might. Had the main switch been turned off, I would have automatically been released but

then even if I shouted out for help nobody could have heard me as the door was locked.

I thought of my favorite deity and of Swami and in desperation pulled my hand with all my strength. Though I had a feeling that it would be well nigh impossible but it worked. It was a wonder of wonders. However in the process, for the force my right foot was smashed against the wall and I suffered a fracture of the bone.

Later the Doctor who examined my foot told me that it was indeed a miracle that I was saved from sure electrocution especially as I was standing on a wet floor with no footwear.

In 1998 we had been to Puttaparthi and my daughter was very keen that Swami should autograph her Album. She had been unsuccessful in taking the Autograph album into the hall and had to leave it in the care of a sevadal whom she was acquainted with. After the darshan she told me that she was rather sad that she was unable to obtain swami's signature and there was no way in which she could get it before she left Puttaparthi the next day. Next morning when we were packing our bags, the autograph book lay open on the table with the words "Love – Baba".

On Guru poornima day in July 1998, we were invited by Mr.Ratnavadivel of whom I have mentioned earlier, to partake in the celebrations at the Sindhi center. However that year we decided that instead we would celebrate the occasion at home with bajans by the three of us. It is said that Swami liked laddu, hence a few laddus were made as prasadam. The plate containing the laddus was covered and kept on the altar in the shrine room while we sang the bajans. After the bajan was over we removed the plate to share the prasadam. We noticed some substance which appeared at first sight as fungus white in colour covering the laddu, on a close examination however we discovered that it was holy ash! There was no way in which the holy ash could have attached itself to the laddu as the plate was

covered. We have heard of instances where devotees had experienced kumkum, holy ash and sandal wood powder appearing in their prasadam.

It was yet another Thursday in 1998 and I looked forward to attending the bajan at the center. It was 2.45 p.m. when my Chairman instructed me to deputize for him at the meeting of shareholders of a company situated elsewhere in the city of which he was also a Director. This meeting was scheduled to commence at 3.30 p.m. and I had barely 45 minutes to reach the venue. My chairman had not given me a letter of authority to represent him. I had therefore to prepare a suitable letter. I was wondering whether I could make it to the meeting because it was time when schools were closing for the day and it was therefore peak time for traffic on the roads. As I turned on to the main road I saw massive traffic congestion. What was foremost in my mind was not the official engagement I had to attend but whether I would be able to attend the bajan at the center at 6.00 p.m. that evening. The agenda of the meeting was long and cross talk among the participants made matters complicated. I kept looking at the time on and off. Somebody seated next to me whispered that the meeting was unlikely to end before 6.30 p.m. This added to my fear and I was praying to Swami from within. At 5.00 p.m. all too suddenly the Chairman of the meeting announced that the meeting would adjourn and he gave no specific reason for doing so. What more a pleasant surprise did I want, for I was able to make it to the bajan at the center.

On New Year day in the year 1999, we decided to visit the Shakthi temple as usual and in the evening to hold a bajan amongst ourselves and invite the lady aspirant who had been assisting us with the cleaning of Swami's room. The customary sweet rice was made and kept for Swami along with other prasad.

After the bajan a portion of the sweet rice was served to everyone. While eating the sweet rice, the lady aspirant's spoon struck something metallic in the sweet rice which shone like gold. On

close examination it was found to be a five rupee coin! How the coin found its way into the sweet rice was a mystery.

This lady as she disclosed to us later was a stickler when it comes to observing customs during the New Year period. One such custom was to receive the first coin in the New Year from elderly persons in the family in the hope that the recipient will not be in want during the year.

She was extremely happy as she firmly believed as we did, that it was Bhagawan who had given her the first coin for the New Year and had fulfilled her desire. From that day onwards she was regular in attending bajans. Through the grace of Swami she was able to visit Puttaparthi for the first time that year. She was not married though many unsuccessful attempts had been made by her relatives to find her a suitable partner; she had given up hope of getting married. Her prayer to Swami as she recounted later was to help her settle down in life. Swami did so, for within a few months after she returned from Puttaparthi, a suitable groom was found. She is now living in Germany happily with two children.

Early in January 2000, my daughter was sending a New Year greeting card for Swami, with a request to Swami which she kept as a closely guarded secret away from the family. I casually mentioned to her that she will not receive any reply as there are millions of devotees around the world with more pressing needs, who would have posted similar letters to Swami. However she was insistent and posted the card and letter to Swami. It was a Thursday and was the day of the first bajan for the New Year, and we went to the Sindhi center. After the bajan, Maharaji the priest at the center of whom I had referred to in an earlier chapter distributed pocket size calendars with pictures of Swami in different postures on the reverse of the calendars. The picture I received was that of Swami raising His hand in benediction blessing His devotees. At home I left this picture on my table. My daughter having seen the picture, was bemused and asked

me from where I had received the calendar picture of Swami, when I told her the source, she confided that in her letter to Swami, she had asked Swami to send a picture of Him with the raised hand blessing the family. True enough Swami had sent the picture through the priest. Thus Swami made me understand that He has time for every devotee of His.

Tuesday is a day I usually visit the center to attend to the service assigned to me by Mr. Ratnavadivel. Thereafter I would clean the picture of swami at the rear of the hall. On one of such days, I had cleaned Swami's picture and having decorated with sandalwood paste, I observed that Swami's picture had tiny drops of water similar to those tiny perspiration bubbles that trickle down the body when one has exerted oneself. It could not have been rain droplets as it had not rained. I stood puzzled for some time. Thereafter I had forgotten the incident.

I recollected this incident years later after holy ash materialized in our home when tiny drops of water developed on the large picture of Swami kept outside the shrine room on bajan days. Water was trickling down each time the picture was wiped clean. Some of the devotees who were leaving late after the bajan that day said they had heard and read of similar events elsewhere.

We loved to adorn Swami's picture at the center with flowers on bajan days. But had no opportunity to do so as it was the duty of the sevadal at the center. Nevertheless we took flowers to be given to the sevadal.

Once I took bunches of some orange Ixora flowers which were in full bloom in the garden and the organizer of the bajan center too, brought a tray of lotus flowers. The sevadal emptied the flowers I had brought on to a tray to be used for chanting the 108 names of Swami. I was most disappointed when the sevadal began decorating, Swami's picture with the Lotus flowers brought by the organizer. Just then something very strange and unexplainable happened. The

organizer having reached the other end of the hall shouted across the hall and ordered the sevadal to drape Swami's picture with the orange flowers and to use the Lotus flowers for chanting of the Ashthotram. How did the organizer know what was passing through my mind. Is it Swami's omniscience?

Rama Navami is celebrated at the Sindhi center in a very special way, followed by a *bajan*. We had made lemon rice *prasadam* to be given to the devotees at the center. Before going to the center we had served some of the *prasadam* on a plate for Swami. When we came back after the *bajan*, and on lighting the oil lamp in the shrine room we observed that there was a heap of holy ash in the middle of the lemon rice. In a similar incident my family had a *bajan* at home for which *prasadam* had been prepared and left before Swami's picture in the shrine room. After the *bajan* was over when we removed the tray we noticed that a portion of the sweet meat kept as *prasadam* was missing and as if to counter balance for the missing *prasadam* quantities of saffron and holy ash were in the tray.

When people hear of experiences of Swami's miracles from other devotees they become fully aware of Swami's divineness. Then they long and ask earnestly for Swami's *Darshan*. Swami says miracles are unprompted gifts of His love and are meant to build faith in non believers. Devotees need to have steadfast faith when He puts us through the mill which can be trying and thwarting and then just before we break down He redeems us.

Reciting the various mantras daily in the morning was and still is a practice in the family at dawn. Mr. Ratnavadivel the sindhi *bajan* center priest had initiated me into reciting some of these mantras on Tuesdays, when I used to attend the center to complete the service entrusted to me by him. He even gave me a book of mantras for my personal use. On one of those days I opened the book to repeat the *Devi* mantra, with the *Guru Mantra*, on the opposite page. I noticed a small round sticker of Swami firmly pasted on that page.

My family denied any knowledge of its mysterious appearance on that page. It then occurred to me that its appearance was perhaps an indication that I should also include repeating the *Guru mantra* in my daily prayers which I did from then onwards.

I had been longing for sometime time to take roses from the new plant which I had specifically purchased some months ago, to decorate Swami's picture on *bajan* days at the center. One morning there were the first few buds in various stages of bloom. However there was only one bud, which I was sure, would bloom on Thursday. The following day, to my surprise all five buds bloomed and I had the fortune of taking all of them to decorate Swami's picture at the *bajan* center. Strange are the ways of Swami by which He fulfills the desires of His devotees.

It was yet another Thursday, and a meeting had been summoned with the Chairman and the Board of Directors and the Managers of the various branches of the Institution where I worked. At such meetings it is usual to review the progress in the different branches of the Institution prior to meeting the Members of Parliament and Government Ministers to reply queries raised by them. Such meetings are more or less progress review meetings. This meeting with our Chairman and the Board of Directors was fixed for 3.00 p.m. The moment I heard this, my heart sank for I knew the meeting will not end before 6.00 p.m. and I will necessarily miss the *bajan* at the center. I told my family to go for the *bajan* and if I did not come for them after the *bajan*, they could walk the short distance back home.

In an unexpected turn of events the Chairman suddenly decided to advance the time of the meeting from 3.00 p.m. to 12.00 noon! I was more than delighted when the meeting concluded at half past three, giving me ample time to attend the *bajan* at the center. This was another instance of Swami knowing even the smallest thought of His devotees - another instance of Swami's omniscience.

Swami tests the genuineness of His devotees by bringing some obstacles, hurdles and troubles before He gives us what we long for. A number of devotees whom we have met and who have experienced such hurdles in their lives have endorsed our views.

There are many instances when Bhagawan has shielded us from disasters and it is not possible to recount all of them in this book.

When certain unexplainable episodes occur, such a train of occurrences are dismissed as coincidences. But are these coincidences when they come to pass as you wish and time and time again?

CHAPTER 3

The Coming

It was in April in the year 2000 and it was the period of the New Year in Sri Lanka when many religious and cultural activities take place. It is one of the biggest festivals for the Tamils and Singhalese in Sri Lanka as well as in Tamil Nadu in India. The New Year brings new life and it is also a time for re-union of families. On New Year's Day, the 14th of April the Hindu Temples and Buddhist places of worship are crowded with throngs of devotees.

Being a "Shakthi" (Lord Shiva's consort) devotee it was usual for us to attend the biggest Shakthi Temple in the city for the early morning Darshan.

Hence on the 14th of April 2000, the particular temple we had been attending was as usual crowded with devotees. There was literally not even an inch to turn around in the temple. There was no way in which a pooja could be performed. One had to be content with having been able to visit and pray at the temple at dawn and witness the waving of camphor flame to the deity.

After waving of lighted camphor flame, the priests came around distributing the holy ash. I received a pinch of the holy ash in my hand, and having applied a little of it on my forehead, I was wondering what I should do with the balance of the holy ash in my hand. Usually it is packed in a small piece of paper and taken home or dropped into a quiet corner of the temple so that devotees do not tread on it. Dropping the balance holy ash in a quiet corner of the temple was impossible with the crowd pushing their way either into

or out of the temple. Hence I decided to drop the balance of the holy ash in my shirt pocket!

I had in my pocket a small calendar size picture of Swami encased in a plastic cover to avoid the picture becoming damp. This picture I carried about wherever I went.

After the Darshan in the temple we came home. I left the picture of Swami, on the table, and went about my business. I observed subsequently that a minute quantity of the holy ash of not much significance had got embedded in between the plastic cover and Swami's picture.

The next day I observed, when picking up the picture to be put into my pocket before I went out, that the quantity of holy ash had swelled. Even at this point of time we had not realized that holy ash was swelling anew. On the third day after the New Year the holy ash had further increased, almost covering the chest of Swami in the picture and appeared bulky. There were also specks of holy ash on Swami's hands and face.

The following day, a Thursday we were in for a pleasant surprise. My breathing nearly stopped, when I witnessed the picture in the plastic cover fully covered with holy ash. It had begun to spill out. This was an ecstatic experience and we were overjoyed and elated. We have heard of the appearance of Holy ash in the homes of devotees but had never experienced it.

The packet containing the pocket calendar size photograph of Bhagawan with the holy ash swelling up within, was placed against a larger picture of Bhagawan standing on a silver tray in the shrine room. The shrine room was partly a visitor's bedroom as well. In the corner of this room was a small table on which there were two brass oil lamps and a few pictures of Hindu gods. It was my daughter who took upon herself the duty to clean the altar and light the lamps daily before offering her prayers to Swami.

The next morning when we were about to light the oil lamps on the altar we discovered that the holy ash had filled the packet and spilled over into the tray and we were left stunned and gasping. The next two days saw us more joyful as the tray itself began to fill up with holy ash coming out from the packet with occasional puffs at intervals as though a mini volcano was erupting. It was an amazing sight and cannot be said in words.

Many thousands of miracles continue to occur in the homes of devotees. These miracles are performed by Swamy privately where the devotee does not publicize them for fear of losing Swami's grace and so most of these miracles have gone unwritten.

C H A P T E R 4

Appearance of Holy Ash (Viboothi), Vermillion and Sandle Wood Powder

On the 18th of April 2000, four days after the holy ash appeared messages written in holy ash dissolved in water appeared all over the doors in the house. Quite recently I recollect reading a book where Swami is said to have written messages with holy ash in the home of a Mohamadan devotee. It would not be out of place for me to mention that Terrance, an Englishman, a devotee of Swami, practicing divine healing and who was in Sri Lanka recently was introduced to us by another devotee. During a conversation with him we learnt that in his home town in England there are similar happenings in the house of an Indian devotee.

This holy ash that Swami materialized in our house had a strong and over whelming fragrance. The holy ash falling from the raised hands of Swami in the picture named by Him as “perfumed viboothi,” is another materialization. The holy ash that is cascading from the coconut in the kumbam vessel in our shrine room was the third materialization of Viboothi. Those devotees who saw the viboothi and the kumbam water were lost in silence. The materialized Viboothi on all three occasions had different tastes and fragrance. I make reference to these incidents later on in this chapter.

We were terrified and frightened that the writings on the doors in viboothi could be the work of unnatural beings, even though we

had no belief in ghosts and spirits. Some of the messages were serious demands. One message directed that no person shall wear chappals or shoes inside the house. We discarded all our foot wear which we had hitherto used inside the house and consigned them to a corner of the house. Then there was another message which read that nobody should consume non-vegetarian food. My daughter and I had been vegetarians for a long time and this message from Swami was indeed a timely blessing in disguise. This ended the long drawn out desire to make our family go into a satwick diet of vegetables.

At the beginning devotees requested holy ash to be given to them in small packets but as time went on when more and more devotees attended the bajans it became impossible to make out holy ash packets to cater to all of them. Swami stepped in and a message instructed us that medicinal viboothi in packets could be given to devotees only once a month. This gave us relief as we could not simply cope up, even packing holy ash once a month. This situation was overcome when Swami instructed that the packing of the holy ash once a month was one of the duties of Asoka, Ramani and Princy who were devotees of selfless service. These three devotees never commenced any Sai activity be it cleaning Swami’s room, cooking food for Swami or packing holy ash without constantly repeating the name of the Lord. After every cleaning session of Swami’s room they would sit down by the altar to meditate before leaving.

Quite often messages appeared for us, when any one of us happened to fall ill, He would prescribe a mixture of holy ash dissolved in water and consumed until the sickness abates. It seemed a difficult proposition to make up our mind to drink perfumed viboothi water. However there was no other way but to obey the Lord for fear that the illness may become worse or prolong. Swami gives viboothi to be consumed along with the medicine prescribed by doctors. Many devotees had experienced that illnesses such as pains, fevers and the like and some serious illnesses have completely vanished when viboothi is consumed or applied with faith.

In the first two weeks the messages appeared for the purpose of reforming the members of the household. Once a message appeared on the door of the refrigerator. This message remained on the door of the fridge for a few years until we decided to dispose of the refrigerator after it packed up in 2005. Swami then copied the same message on the shrine room door. This message was perhaps meant for the devotees who were to come in numbers in later years and it read **“Nobody is to enter my room without my permission, nor advertise take photographs of the happenings in this house.”** Swami has said that Avatars need no publicity and has infact questioned devotees, “What do you know about me?”

We were dazed and greatly astonished at the extraordinary events unfolding before our eyes. Our fears worsened. We began to wonder whether all what we saw happening should be told to another devotee and his views obtained, for we had not known that similar miracles had been happening in other parts of the world in the houses of devotees. We were wondering why Swami chose our house, for we developed faith in Him only recently. There were other long time devotees in whose houses these miracles could have been performed.

Once we saw a message written in holy ash on the silver tray which was used for keeping flowers. This message requested me to “call My priests today.”

We attended the prayers on Thursdays at the Sindhi Centre regularly. The priests Maharaji and Mr. Ratnavadivel who conducted the rituals before the bajan were very devoted and performed the rituals and Vedic chanting piously with extreme devotion. I concluded that “priests” referred to in the message on the tray were these two priests at the Sindhi Centre. I felt obliged to invite the two respected gentlemen into our house. While on my way to the Sindhi Centre thoughts began to pass through my mind once again as to whether it is Swami Himself who is writing these messages or whether it was the work of some evil spirit. I was confused and even thought of returning

home instead of making myself look stupid. I begged the deities to free me of my confusion, but then, the silent voice speaking to me from within directed me to inform the priests instead of disobeying the order.

The two priests Mr. Ratnavadivel and Maharaji were surprised at what had happened at our home. However they came. They confirmed that it is the work of Bhagawan as they have read and heard of similar happenings in the houses of Swami’s devotees. These words of assurance calmed our minds and put us at ease. The priests performed Aarthi (showing of camphor flames to the Lord) and returned to the Sindhi Centre.

Some of the messages which appeared thereafter requested for items of food to be prepared by us and kept as prasadam. We were only too happy to work on Swami’s menus. On occasions Swami had commended the preparation and humorously wrote that the canteen at Puttaparthi needed cooks and whether we would apply. Quite often to show us that He has tasted the prasadam, there would be evidence of food particles stuck on to the mouth of Swami in the picture.

Within a month of these happenings, Swami wanted us to hold a bajan at our house inviting some devotees we knew. Prior to these happenings the three members of our family used to sit down on important festival days to sing a few bajan songs. We were not up to the standard of professional singers at the Sai Centers. Nevertheless since we had gained some experience in singing by attending the bajan at the centers we were able to some what keep to the rhythm with of course no musical instruments.

When Swami wanted bajans held formally we had to request some Sai singers known to us to help us. At the beginning it was all excitement arranging for a bajan. We had to learn by asking the devotees. I recall that we never even cracked a coconut before beginning a bajan nor did we recite the Ashtothra! The practice of

cracking a coconut which I wanted to later abandon was discouraged in a message which said that it was customary to do so.

As time went by I began writing down the steps in conducting a bajan discreetly and found that with each bajan there was considerable improvement. When devotees increased in number the beds in the room were dismantled on bajan days to provide space. Once again when space was becoming a problem the furniture from the living room was also moved to accommodate more devotees on bajan days.

Many of our non sai friends and relations were agitated when they heard that we were organizing bajans in our house. Some of them advised us to keep away from this activity. Some even offered to pray for us to be relieved of the presence of Swami in our home. Would anyone have the heart to drive away the Lord from His home? We had by now become convinced that we should carry on with Swami's direction irrespective of what others say.

Then came the most tall order from Swami who said that the room which was hitherto the shrine room and a bedroom was now going to be for His, sole occupation. This was followed by another message which said that He was "the Master of this house". This meant that nothing could be done in the house without obtaining His permission first.

It was at this point of time that an unpleasant incident took place. Some of the people spread a scandal that it was not Bhagawan who was writing these instructions but it was some evil spirit. This was a part of a campaign and spread at lightning speed. Some devotees hence decided not to attend our bajans. However a small number of devotees gave us tremendous encouragement by attending the bajans. The latter were devotees who had heard and read about similar happenings in countries where other centers were conducting Sai activities

In addition to our troubles there was a devotee from a center who insisted that the house be kept open for public and news of the appearance of holy ash be announced at the main bajan Centre which we used to attend. We were averse to this unwanted publicity. We argued that this was a private dwelling house and cannot be kept open at all times. Since there was no giving in by both parties we arrived at a compromise and that was, should Swami grant the request of the devotee concerned then we had no objection to his request. The very next day a message appeared which read that **"Nobody should enter My room without My permission"**, adding further that **"there should be no advertising of the appearance of holy ash, nor photographs taken"**. This then ended the controversy that had arisen. This message is still on the door to the shrine room though written in holy ash it remains unerased to date. We have covered this message with a transparent sheet for protection.

I shall end this chapter by quoting Shiridi Sai Baba. **"Let anyone speak hundreds of things against you, you must not react by giving a bitter reply. If you always show tolerance in such things you will certainly be happy"**. Indeed Swami has kept us happy for the appearance of the holy ash was unexpected.

CHAPTER 5

Prophets of doom

A year had gone by after holy ash began to appear, some devotees began another story that the manifestation of holy ash was a temporary phase and that it would soon cease. So much so some devotees again began to stay away canvassing against coming for our bajans. Swami has said that He is a silent listener of every conversation. At this time another message appeared on a picture of Shridi Sai Baba. This message was in Tamil, the translation of which read let those who speak ill of me do so and let those who adore me also do so. A similar message appeared on the picture of Bhagawan which gave us confidence that Swami will not cease manifesting holy ash in our home. We were terribly worried whether the wagging tongues would succeed in their propaganda and that the doings in the house were the work of evil spirits. At times it occurred to us that if the writings are by evil spirits then why did not these evil spirits do any harm to us? The writing on Bhagawan's picture was a clear message as it stated that "this center will go on" and that He will not "leave the place".

To convince us Swami wrote in holy ash naming our house as 'SAI MALAR CENTRE'. Not stopping there, Swami went further and said **"I am not evil or a ghost, I am Baba, who are they to call me evil? Those who doubt me are not my devotees."** Although this message settled the question of the work of evil spirits, we had to face a second onslaught of gossip. Some of the devotees who came from other centers were lead singers at their respective

centers. The news of their coming to sing at our center reached the ears of the committees of management of those centers. These singers were warned not to sing at other centers by their committees of management. This led to the good singers leaving us for fear of being penalized in the centers where they used to sing. Swami came to our rescue and wrote that He would direct good Bajan singers to attend at our center. This Swami did when some very good singers other than those who sang at the centers began attending our bajans. Having sent competent bajan singers to our house swami began sending more and more devotees. They seemed to come out from nowhere.

A devotee's friend Hariharan from England arrived during this period. He is a good tabola player and had been playing the instrument at a Sai Centre in London for many years. He remained in Sri Lanka for some months and was playing this musical instrument at our bajans. Before he went back to England he gifted the tabola to be used at our center. A lady not a devotee asked us whether she could gift a harmonium to be used at our center which belonged to her daughter who went away after marriage. We purchased the instrument from her. Hence the two musical instruments which we badly needed for the bajans were in our possession. There was another devotee Sritharan whose faith in Swami made him contribute a share towards the purchase of an amplifier set.

At about this time, Hariharan and we decided that we would all go to Puttaparti. It dawned on us that unless Swami had willed no body can visit him at Puttaparti. We were disappointed and had abandoned the idea of our pilgrimage to Puttaparthi. A few days later a message appeared inviting us to come to Puttaparti. We made quick arrangements to leave on a pilgrimage to the abode of Bhagawan for two weeks.

My daughter decided that she needed to take the opportunity to clear for all time the doubt by asking Swami whether it is He who is writing messages in our house. A direct reply to this question was

impossible unless we were called for an interview with Him. Being called for an interview was most remote as there were thousands of long time devotees who had not yet been granted any interview. My daughter then decided that she would write to Swami and if Swami at Darshan time took the letter from her then it was an indication that it was Swami and nobody else who is writing the messages in our home.

At Puttaparthi despite the inconvenience we were seated on the hard marble floor of Kulwant hall for the arrival of our Lord. Swami had come for Darshan and each time He came near, He deviated and went down some other aisle.

She was most disappointed as she did not even have a proper glimpse of Swami but Swami's ways are unique. She lost all hope. We had to console her. Then on the day before we were to leave Puttaparthi, Swami appeared at the morning Darshan and took the letter from my daughter. Joy knew no bounds.

As she told me later, on the one hand she felt certain that Swami will take the letter, but on the other, a chill passed through her for if Swami did not take her letter, she had felt that the whole world would have crumbled on her.

Back home, we began to have bajans weekly on a grand scale. Swami never allowed us to rest; we were busier than we were earlier. Our attending the weekly bajans at the centers became less frequent. Some devotees persuaded us to stop the bajans at home as being too active may affect on our health. Infact, it was about this time that I fell seriously ill with acute gastric pain. We had implicit faith in Bhagawan to cure me of my illness. Swami persisted that I should take holy ash mixed in water. Like me there have been thousands of devotees who have been healed by the consumption or application of viboothi.

There were some devotees who were anxious to know the

length of time we had been devotees of Bhagawan. We had as mentioned else where in this book been devotees from 1992. Then the next question they posed was why He chose our house when there were so many ardent devotees who have yearned for Swami's presence in their homes. Swami had a message written for them in our house. This message which appeared when miracles began happening stated that **"I have come to this house for certain reasons" – Baba**". We never asked Swami what the reasons were. Who were we to question Swami? I have a recollection of reading a book authored by another foreign devotee, where the author says that Swami performs His miracles in the houses of persons who have little or no belief in the Leela's He performs. The author of that book concludes that Leelas are performed to make that devotee fully convinced of Swami's omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience. We, who had hated Swami earlier, now began to adore Him as Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

However years later Swami for the first time revealed to us privately the reason for His coming into this house, which was written on the Board. We are therefore not making the reason public. Nevertheless this reason has been recorded verbatim in a Diary I maintain. Who can gauge the mysteries of Swami who knows the present, past and the future of everyone **"through and through"**.

With the passage of time Swami began to give us more and more orders. It seemed to us that we were beginning to have more problems than before. He, we thought was a hard task master and one had to comply with His orders. His tests are so severe that the devotee feels that should Swami give one more order, he would break up. The orders He gave obviously were meant to tell us that we needed to be active. Though we had led a quiet life yet there were some habits in us which Swami abhorred. We were regular T.V. viewers and visited the cinemas frequently. I had a lot of anger, pride and ego in me. I was what others would refer to as a suspicion afflicted individual, quite often arguing aloud, arrogant and flying into

a rage for trivial reasons. Quite often we had been indulging in idle worldly matters. Today we stand reformed of these undesirable habits. When we had fallen sick Swami would not let us rest even during such times and did not take no for an answer. At the beginning we mistook Him to be repressive. This later we learnt was to detract our minds from concentrating on our sickness, for body consciousness is never in Swami's vocabulary. Was it not Swami who said "I am giving you all these troubles in order to teach you some lessons". We consoled ourselves that we were being put through the mill of reformation. The body Swami has often said is a temporary shelter to harbour the Athma. Athma never perishes but the body does. Speaking of the body Swami once said **"I am not the body, a mass of flesh, bones and blood. I am not the mind, a bundle of wasteful desires, manifest and unmanifest. I am not the feeling of infatuation that obstructs the way to liberation. I am that eternal Paramatman who is aware of the power that I am."**

Prior to each week's bajan Swami's message on the board which appears as the "Thought for the day", is read out to the devotees at the end of the bajan. Some of these thoughts for the day are recorded elsewhere in this book.

When Swami wishes reprimand a devotee especially at Darshan time at Prashanthi Nilayam when he walks among the sea of devotees assembled there, He would stop near that devotees neighbour and tell him all what He wants to the devotee concerned would then get the message.

The dates and times for the bajans which we began weekly are never fixed by us. Quite often the dates coincided with the festival days of the various religions or some important day such as the birth day of past masters. There could hence be an interval of less than seven or up to nine days between each bajan. The schedule setting out the dates and times of the bajans would also appear on the board. Initially it was necessary to telephone each of the devotees of the

dates and times of the next bajan. When the number of devotees increased, we began the practice of making announcements at the end of each bajan indicating the date and time of the next bajan. The bajans were of a hour or so in duration except when Swami indicated that some bajan's were special, in which event, the bajan time became a hour and a half or so.

It was in the evening of the day before the Thaipongal Festival (Sankranthi day as it is called in Telugu language) in the year 2001, and we had all arrangements made to hold the bajan on the next morning. We were seated in the shrine room doing up the final touches, when from nowhere a baby magpie flew into the shrine room and looking around, perched itself on top of the picture of Swami. It was past seven in the evening and what on earth was the little bird doing in the shrine room? Could this little bird be Swami Himself.? We then caught the bird for fear that if left alone it would be killed by the stray cats. We fed her some prasad which we had left for Swami and looked around in the dark whether we could hear the mother bird's cry. Indeed in a few minutes in flew the mother bird and hopped out of the room with its little one following. Devotees are aware that Swami has appeared in the form of birds and animals and even inanimate objects to show that He is present in every living being and non living things and has said that all forms and all names are His.

We began to have more visitors. Squirrels came daringly into the dining room and roamed about in the house. At appointed hours each day there was a squirrel who would come near the window and when he saw us, would stand on his hind legs clamouring for food. He got so used to us that whether it rained or not, we began waiting for his arrival to feed him. He was faithful for often after his meals he would play for a while and then rest on the balcony railing looking into the house.

One Thursday he climbed over the window ledge and scaled

over my shoulders as I was seated on the chair near the dining table and landed with a thud on the table, quickly grabbed a morsel of some food and exited as fast as he came in. We never saw him thereafter. A few days later Swami had a message for us that the squirrel was no more as he had been killed by a stray cat. However, Swami in His mercy sent us another squirrel with the identical habit of begging for food.

Then there was the incident of a pair of birds which one day flew into the house and settled themselves on a comb of banana's and began pecking at the fruits chattering away as they did. They were not bothered about our movements in the house. They too became frequent visitors and we allowed them to have their way and enjoy the fruits. One day we had forgotten to keep the fruits for them and they flew into the shrine room and began eating the fruits kept for Swami. How they knew that there were fruits in the shrine room remains a mystery even to this day. All these birds and animals began coming to us after holy ash had begun materializing in the house.

More and more devotees telephoned us wanting to come and view the holy ash materialization. To all of them we had to initially say 'regret'. We added that unless a devotee's name appears on the board it was not possible for us to admit the devotee. This was in keeping with Swami's message on the door. Some of these devotees misunderstood us for saying so. Could we go against the wish of the Lord? Further we felt that some of them wanted to be admitted for curiosity's sake. Dr. D.J. Gadhia (Sai Charan Dasanus Das) in his book mentions of an incident where Swami had instructed him to stand near the door and if anybody wants to come in, to first give him his name. If Swami gave permission to allow him to enter the room. Perhaps Swami wished that the same direction should be followed at our center when He indicated that no body should enter His room without His permission.

At this point of time, I recall an incident where one day

Swami wanted us to invite a devotee and his wife whom we had known as good bajan singers at a center. Though we had seen and spoken to them yet we had not bothered to ascertain where they lived. When Swami's message appeared we were in a quandary as to how we could convey the message to them. We decided that the only way was to go to the center on a bajan day and if we were lucky and they came for the bajan we could convey the message. Having decided so we got on with our other work. A few hours later there was Swami's message with their telephone number on the board. We then phoned them and they were surprised as to how we got their phone number when it was not even listed in the telephone directory.

In a similar incident Usha a devotee and a good bajan singer who had not been known to us was invited by Swami. Swami wanted us to call her but this was a task impossible. We made inquiries only to draw a blank. Then the message on the board read that Usha attends bajans at a particular Buddhist temple on Saturdays and that we could locate her there. So we did go to this temple and through inquiries were able to convey Swami's message to her.

There is the following incident of three lady devotees of Swami, Ramani, Princy, and Asoka of whom I have spoken earlier and who were very keen on decorating Swami's room. They insisted that nothing else would give them more pleasure. I had to stand firm and told them not to do so and spend much money. So there was a verbal tug of war between the three ladies and us. Then came the bolt from the blues when Swami's message ordered me not to stand in the way of His devotees, who wished to do service for Him. Let me disclose now, Swami has called us by names at times which we had to bear for the love of our Lord. We know that He does not mean what He says, for the next moment he would address us with love as 'Bangaru' and 'Bakthalu'(Devotee).

We had to humbly give into the lady devotees. The three of them were discussing the colour of the material needed for the

window curtaining in Swami's room. They had gone from shop to shop in the shopping area of the city looking for suitable material but had been unlucky, and they returned tired and weary. Swami had told them that His room should be ready for the New Year bajan which was just a week away. Having obeyed the order of the Lord, they began to panic as the days neared. Swami taking pity on them and being the compassionate one had a message on the board giving the name and address of the curtain material shop where the identical material they were looking for could be purchased. True to His message they went to the shop and found that the exact quantity of material they wanted was remaining in the roll. They purchased the material and managed to keep to the dead line given by Swami.

The son of one of these ladies returned from abroad on a holiday to see his parents. The son was never a devotee of Swami. He had brought chocolates and nick knacks for himself. Swami having known this asked the lady to give Him some chocolates and nick knacks. These were brought the next day and Swami indeed had tasted the eats as there was evidence of the slabs of chocolates having been unwrapped and pieces missing. One next shock He gave this lady was when the message on the board read 'Isn't' your son's birthday on the 18th? How Swami knew what was not even spoken of shows volumes of His omniscience.

Apsara a devotee from Canada had come on a holiday and accompanied her sister, to our home. The elder sister is a devotee who attended our house bajans regularly. As Apsara entered Swami's room she, overcome with emotion, loudly in our presence said that she would give "whatever Swami wanted."

The playful Swami next day wanted her to give Him the beautiful necklace she had purchased at the shops outside Puttaparthi where she had been before coming to Sri Lanka. When she came for the bajan on the following day she removed the chain and left it on Swami's paaduga. She seemed very happy to give it. I was alarmed

and asked my family why Swami had wanted her chain. I had another stern message awhile later on the board questioning my authority to ask Him why He had taken the chain. I felt depressed that Swami had admonished me. Now, thinking back on it I feel that I have been too sensitive to have taken whatever names He called me by, too seriously. However, the compassionate Lord added that He had left a box containing a necklace and a pair of matching earrings for the lady devotee in return for the one that He had taken from her. The lady devotee was so happy that she had received not only a beautiful necklace but also a pair of earrings. This lady told us later that the necklace and the earrings were a perfect match for the lovely green saree which Swami had given her on His birthday some years ago at Puttaparthi. Who can understand Swami's ways?

Quite often Swami had sent me to the homes of devotees requesting me to collect a favourite dish which He relishes. It was embarrassing for me to go into somebody else's house asking for food and I was in two minds whether I should ignore the request made by Swami or not. Pride would never have permitted me to ask for food even though it was for Swami. Nevertheless fearing consequences I decided that I should humble myself. This I thought was a lesson Swami taught me by making this request. Many a time it so happened that at the very moment those devotees were in fact making the very dish that Swami wanted, for themselves and were wondering whether they should call me to give a portion of the food to be kept as prasadam for Swami. Several incidents took place too often and I shall digress here to focus on three specific events.

Dora was making chapathi at home and Swami's message on the board read that I should telephone her and ask her for some chapathi. When I phoned Dora she was surprised. She had in the meanwhile been pondering whether it was not going to be troublesome to me if she asked me to collect a few chapathies for Swami. Later on, when she heard that pieces of the chapathies were missing from Swami's plate she was more than delighted.

Ramani is a good culinary expert. She was making cadju curry one day and a thought had passed through her mind, as she later told me, to send Swami a portion of the curry. But then she lived so far away that she had abandoned the idea. The message on the board in our shrine room stated that Swami had gone into the kitchen in Ramani's house and a tasty cadju curry was being cooked and that I should bring Him some of that curry. When I went to Ramani's house she was taken aback and pleased that her earnest desire to serve the Lord has been fulfilled.

Vidhya had gone to the super market and had casually picked up a packet of chick peas. She had no desire of making anything out of it and the packet remained on the kitchen shelf. One morning Swami's message directed that I should telephone Vidhya to make a good channa curry out of the chick peas. When I phoned her she wanted to know how we had known that she had chick peas at home. I was obliged to inform her of the source.

For some time I had been ailing with severe stomach disorder. It was on one of those days that Swami's message on my bed head stated that he had come 'to save me from my illnesses'. On several occasions when I had severe disorders and pain the worst fears of the disorder being a terminal illness flashed through my mind. I was indeed depressed about my illness. Swami had many a time to calm me, drawn the human digestive system on the board and had told me that there were two small ulcers indicating the locations, which were giving me the pains. Then He went on to say that there was no need for me to see a Specialist further but to continue the medicine given by my Doctor. Once on the eve of our departure to Puttaparthi the message on the board stated "if necessary" consult any Specialist at the General Hospital either at White Field or at Puttaparthi on "phone No's..." We did check these numbers and they were correct.

We were informed that the Specialty Hospital at Puttaparthi had no department of Gastroenterology, whilst the Specialty Hospital

at White Field was inconvenient, in regard to accommodation for the family members. I gave up hope of having any medical attention, but Swami's message at that point of time was that I would enter the Specialty Hospital in a few years.

In the intervening years I continued to have the abdominal pains for which I obtained medications from my Doctors.

Swami's words put my mind at ease and gave me much consolation that I began to treat my illness as something that would occur if I took food forbidden by Swami for my illness. He would say 'take my Viboothi mixed in water'. More of this later in chapter 11 at page 92.

In a message that appeared in May in the year 2001 Swami said that **"I am Master of this House, a silent listener of every conversation and an unseen guest at every meal"**. True to form when new devotees phoned or knocked at the door requesting that they be permitted to enter His room our initial reaction is to say 'regret'. However we tell these devotees that if Swami called them we would inform them. In almost all cases messages would appear on the board instructing us to call the devotee concerned.

There was a case of a devotee wanting to know whether he could bring a well known vocalist who goes on the air at the local radio station programmes. This devotee admitted that the vocalist was a non-believer in Swami. Next morning a message on the board read 'call T.V. Murugesu who sang the famous Venakateshwara song, ask him to come for today's bajan'. When Murugesu came he was stunned beyond belief to know that Swami had also known his initials and the correct spelling of his name.

In a similar occurrence Swami's message requested us to call 'M.R. Vidhya'. This lady was shocked out of wits and said those were her initials and the correct way to spell her name. These are further two instances of Swami's Omniscience.

Kalyani Sundararajan is an author of books on Swami and a devotee who had been blessed by Swami personally for singing many bajan numbers composed by her and for her services rendered in Reiki healing. Her husband, a Cosmetic Surgeon at Apollo Hospital in Madras is equally a long time devotee. Many a miracle has taken place in their home in Madras. Prior to our knowing her, she and her husband had visited Sri Lanka many times. She was introduced to us by another devotee with whom she was staying on one of her visits to Sri Lanka. Having obtained Swami's permission to let the couple enter His room, the couple came to our home. There was already a message for her on the board reading 'Ammah (mother) how are you?' This lady later told us that quite often when she visited Swami He would lovingly address her as 'Ammah'.

In a house, in Bombay where we had been visiting Poonam a Maharashtra lady, we observed that Swami was writing messages in that house. Poonam is very devoted to Swami and has an adopted son Manthar. This boy is also very fond of Swami and has visions of Swami very often. Poonam teaches English and Maths to a few children to keep herself occupied. It appeared that she had been often asking Swami for the gift of a child. In her shrine room Swami had written on the wall 'Aiyee (mother) I am your child Bala Sai'. From thence onwards the relationship between Bala Sai and His mother became very close. Poonam began holding bajans and poojas in her home and Bala Sai would scribble messages all over her shrine room walls. When we visited her in the company of Renganathan of whom more will be said later in this book, we observed that Swami had scribbled messages on the ceiling as well. One particular message caught our eye. This message asked Poonam whether she could make a chocolate cake for His birthday. We were emotionally taken up by this message and bought a cake from a vegetarian restaurant. Having placed the cake near His alter in Poonam's house we shared information on Sai miracles with Poonam before we went away. That night Poonam phoned Renganathan and she had appeared to be in a flurry of excitement. She had wanted us to come to her home and

witness what Swami had done with the cake. We saw that indeed Bala Sai had eaten a huge chunk of the cake.

Along with her students home work books, Poonam also kept exercise books for teaching Bala Sai. We saw the exercise books where Bala Sai had written out mathematical tables, the alphabet and a few simple English words. Thereafter He had assumed the role of a teacher in that house and corrected the home work of the other students of Poonam!

A devotee and his two daughters were regular in their attendance at the bajans held in our house. We knew the father's name but never the names of the two daughters. One of these girls could sing bajans very well. After a while the girls stopped coming and we never took pains to inquire from the parents the reasons for their not coming. Some weeks later Swami's message requested me to 'call A, and B. (names withheld) daughters of K. for the next bajan and B must sing'. We were at sea not knowing whom Swami was referring to. After a while it dawned on us that K meant Kulendran and then obviously A and B were his daughters. We phoned the mother of the two girls and asked her if A and B were the names of her daughters. The mother's response was positive and she asked us how we had known their daughters' names. We then told her that Swami's message disclosed these names. The mother was surprised and confirmed that even the order of seniority between the girls was also A. and B. In a similar event a message read that we should request Asoka of whom I have spoken of earlier "to bring for the next bajan her six month old grand daughter Shivani". We had known that Asoka had a grand child but did not know the baby's name nor the age. Asoka was flabbergasted when she read Swami's message.

The first "Sankrahanthi festival in the House after Swami began materializing holy ash was on 14th of January in the year 2001, This Festival called "Thai Pongal" in Tamil is an important festival that is also celebrated in Puttaparthi. The day before in the afternoon Swami had instructed us by another message that the festival should

be celebrated on a grander scale than in the previous years followed by a Bajan. So it was, a larger vessel for boiling the milk rice for the devotees that was placed on the fire. We were observing the vessel with the milk boiling and spilling over when suddenly we noted that the milk had turned blackish – grey and the colour was getting darker. For a moment our hearts sank for certainly it was a bad omen. Our initial thought was that the vessel being made of stainless steel had caused the colour change in the milk. But, my family argued that the other vessels in the house did not cause such reactions on previous occasions. It was then that a heavenly fragrance enveloped the area where the pot was boiling. The fragrance was very strong and was similar to rose perfume. On a closer examination of the milk in the pot we observed that there was a sizeable quantity of holy ash which was floating on top of the boiling milk and was gradually getting dissolved. This explained the colour change in the milk. Then we saw the message of Swami on the board which said that it was perfumed medicinal holy ash and the milk rice boiled in it should be served at the bajan. Ever since then in the following years, medicinal holy ash would appear in the vessel on “Pongal” days and devotees looked forward to receiving the “prasad”. Some of these devotees later confided that the little illnesses they were suffering from were cured after they part took in the medicinal milk rice.

The day prior to Guru Poornima day in the year 2002 Swami wanted us to place a Kumbum (a silver or brass pot filled with water and coconut placed upright at the mouth of the vessel and adorned with mango leaves) on the altar near His picture. A Kumbum is a sign of purity and prosperity and is placed in Hindu homes on ceremonial occasions. Next morning when we entered the shrine room we observed that Viboothi, sandalwood powder and kumkum had cascaded down from the top of the coconut into the silver tray on which the kumbum stood. In the days following, the Viboothi kumkum and sandalwood powder increased in quantities and we had to place a larger tray to collect the falling prasadam. Swami forbade us from changing the water in the silver pot and the coconut but

directed that the mango leaves around the coconut could be changed every few days. I see His hand in every miracle that occurs in the shrine room.

A further occurrence of kumkum took place nearly four years ago. We had been to Madurai on our visit to India. Fortunately the day we arrived in Madurai was a Guru Poornima day and so we decided to attend the bajan at Ananda Nilayam, a hall constructed by the late Subramanaiah Chettiar. Most devotees would be aware that it was Chettiar who was responsible for the making of the golden chariot for Swami. After the bajan Chettiar’s son invited all devotees to his house next door and wished to know whether we would purchase Swami’s pictures or paadugas. I purchased a photograph of Swami standing on a pair of silver paadugas at Ananda nilayam.

We returned home to Sri Lanka after a few days. Having arrived in the late noon, we were tired and left whatever we purchased for Swami in the shrine room and the rest of the baggage were taken to our bedroom for clearance. Later in the evening after cleaning up the house we returned to the shrine room for cleaning and dusting. The most important picture which we had purchased in Madurai was missing. It was a large picture and we were sure we had left it in the room on arrival. We looked all over but could not find it, we gave up hope, I took the mop to clear the ceiling of cobwebs, when suddenly I discovered the photograph glued neatly on the wall in the shrine room. A day or two later, in the morning when I went into the shrine room to mop the floor as is the daily practice even now, I found a little heap of kumkum on the floor along the wall. On looking up for its origin I observed that Swami’s raised hand in the picture was showering bright red vermilion (kumkum) on chettiar who is also in the picture. A devotee made a wooden tray to collect the falling quantity of kumkum and the amount in the tray is sizeable today. This kumkum Swami instructed us to give the lady devotees on Navarathri day each year. Although we had given out much kumkum, the balance in the tray seemed not to be diminishing.

My daughter on one of her later visits to Puttaparthi had purchased a rare picture of Swami. In this picture Swami gives the impression that He is appreciating something divine – perhaps a *bajan* well sung – His eyes are closed and hands half raised. This picture also found a place on the shrine room wall. After a few weeks, it was a religious day, holy ash began falling from His raised hands and there were the words “perfumed holy ash” written on His picture. True indeed the holy ash was smelling of a divine fragrance. It smelt of rose or jasmine, so much so the whole room appeared heavenly. This holy ash as days passed by increased in quantity and we had to make a tray along the wall below the picture to collect the falling holy ash. It is no wonder then that Swami wrote on the outer front side of the tray “don’t touch” – Baba.

A big Shridi Sai picture was one we did not have in the shrine room. Swami has always said that He is the re-incarnation of Shridi Sai Baba. Hence we felt that our shrine room was incomplete without a big picture of Shridi Sai. We yearned to obtain one preferably from Shridi. It had not taken long for Swami to have read our mind for, one day a devotee brought the very picture we had desired all framed beautifully. In this picture Shridi Sai sits on a rock in the usual posture with one leg on top of the other. Few days after installation of the picture next to Swami’s chair, holy ash began falling from the toe of the raised leg. This holy ash is coarse and darker in colour than the holy ash falling from the other pictures. On inquiries from devotees who have had the privilege of having gone to Shridi, they told us that the holy ash is identical to the one given as holy ash prasad at Shridi. Shridi Baba materialized holy ash from the eternal fire which is burning even today, many years after He left His mortal body. Subsequently when we by chance visited the holy samadhi of Shridi Sai in the year 2003 we were able to see for ourselves the eternal fire and the holy ash and ‘Duwarakamai’ itself. Unfortunately for us one of the devotees on one of the *bajan* days at our home, touched the toe from which the holy ash was falling and no more holy

ash was produced from that picture. For Bhagawan has directed that none should touch the pictures or statues from which holy ash and other prasad fall as the vibration the picture or statue emits will cease and be useless. For this reason we had from that day onwards continued to maintain vigil in the room to prevent devotees touching the pictures.

On the last two Shivarathri days which we observed by singing *bajan*’s in small groups and performing *Abishek* at the due times during the whole night, Swami’s presence was indicative by the holy ash heap on His chair and *kumkum* heap respectively. The devotees who kept all night vigil were witness to these occurrences.

On special occasions like the 14th of April, the day on which He began materializing holy ash in our home, and 18th of April, when He began writing messages, His birthday, or the date assumed as Shridi Sai Baba’s Birthday, Swami would invariably sprinkle holy ash on the cakes or other prasad made for celebrating the occasions. Many devotees have seen this and have been insistent on being served with the portion of the cake where droplets of holy ash appeared.

There have been many instances where devotees had prepared prasad and left them before Swami in the Shrine room on *bajan* days, Swami had sprinkled holy ash on the prasad even though the container was closed. Presumably this was one way Swami appreciated the devotees true love towards Him in painstakingly preparing the prasad. Most often pieces of prasad especially “*vada*” were missing from the whole.

On Birthdays of certain devotees Swami never failed to wish, these wishes appeared on the Board much to the embarrassment of the older devotees who had kept their dates of birth as closely guarded secrets. To them Swami left little packets of holy ash in cellophane covers and often a pendant bearing His picture. Swami never failed to leave Birthday cards displaying His pictures and the lotus feet which I had seen at the book stall at Puttaparthi together with holy ash

kumkum or sandal wood powder. Quite often inside the card would be Indian currency notes of small denomination as gifts from the compassionate one. Renganathan from Bombay who visits Sri Lanka on business tours, and his wife Rama were recipients of such gifts.

CHAPTER 6

The Growing Garlands

In July 2004 I wished to go on pilgrimage to Puttaparthi. This I was obliged to combine with a visit to our lawyer in Madurai who was handling the compensation claim against the Tour Company about which I have written in chapter 9 of this book.

In the early hours of the 04th of August we reached Puttaparthi from Bombay where we had been to see the Renganathan family.

We were booked into a foreign residents room on the second floor of the building in the ashram after clearance was given by the Foreign National Registration Office situated at Prashanthi Nilayam.

Devotees who have been to Puttaparthi will recall that on the ground floor at the entrance to every building is a fairly large picture of Swami. Devotees in the respective buildings would light the oil lamp and offer flowers and garland the pictures. There is always a sevadal on duty during day hours and another during night time.

On one of the days we were there, there were a number of Devotees flocking around the picture of Swami on the ground floor of a building. They were in fact craning their necks to have a glimpse of the picture. On making inquiries from the sevadal on duty we learnt that a jasmine garland which a devotee had bought for the picture and which draped the picture had grown so much overnight so as to touch the floor. Right through the day devotees from other buildings came to see the garland. Some knelt before the picture, some even cried out

being overwhelmed by emotion. Each day a fresh garland was placed around the picture and that garland too, grew to ground level. We saw this happen throughout our stay at Puttaparthi and it was a wonder beyond the power of the imagination of anyone.

Before leaving India one of the items that we purchased as required by Swami was an orange coloured paper garland intermingled with jasmine buds also made of paper. I was asking my family the reason for Swami wanting a paper garland when it should have been a much more expensive flower garland made of roses, jasmine or chrysanthemum that He should have asked us to buy. We imagined that a length of the paper garland of about 2 ½ meters would be sufficient to adorn a bust size large photograph of Swami at home. I will return to the story of this bust size photograph of Swami in a later chapter.

This paper garland was admired by many devotees who came for bajans. A few months passed by and when cleaning the shrine room one day we observed that the garland had grown below the level of the picture. At first we thought that the garland may have slipped down. On checking, it was not so. Thereafter the garland began extending in length and in a few days time reached floor level and spread itself slowly on the ground. After some days it stopped extending itself. We experienced a shiver of indescribable joy when what we had witnessed at Puttaparthi was happening in our home. Devotees who come to our centre worship this picture mostly.

Ramani, Asoka, and Princy of whom mention had been made earlier were directed by Swami to clean His room, change the chair cover and polish the brassware in the shrine room prior to every bajan.

It so happened that one day during the cleaning, one of them removed all the garlands and dropped them in to a bucket of soap water to wash the dust off, not realizing that the garland which was growing was made of decorative paper. In a little while the colour of

the water turned orange and the Sai sister turned blue with fright that she had destroyed the garland. When this happened our spirits fell low and we were completely devastated. The three of them decided that they should go to the shops immediately in an attempt to locate the same type of garland. These garlands are rare and, not available in Sri Lanka and even if they were available it would be at an exorbitant price. Despite our preventing the three sisters from purchasing the garland two of them left for the shops. After many hours of searching they found a garland somewhat similar to the one which was destroyed but had paid a handsome price. This new garland was the correct size for the picture. The next day and the days thereafter this garland also began to grow slowly reaching ground level and then sprawling itself on the ground, Swami's message read "the garland is growing".

One of these sisters went to White Field as a sevadal with the Sri Lankan group for the Buddha Poormina festival in 2005. She had seen an identical garland to the one that had been discoloured by washing and she purchased a length covering the picture in our shrine room. This garland too has since begun growing and has reached ground level and beyond. One morning we found the big Ganesh Statue in the shrine room draped with a yellow crape paper garland which we had put away. A few days later even this garland too began growing. A further incident occurred when Vidhya who is a devotee of Swami and had been in England came with one of the devotee's known to us with a fresh jasmine garland. She sang a few bajan songs before leaving the shrine room. To our surprise this garland had grown so much and had even reached the outer door by the next morning. We had captured this miracle in a photograph.

CHAPTER 7

The Paadugas

Sometime in August 1997, I had to go to Ramesvaram, in South India to give alms on the First Anniversary of my mother's death. The Ashes had to be immersed in the sea after religious ceremonies conducted by a priest.

After the ceremonies were over, our desire was to visit the Abode of Sai Bhagawan at Puttaparthi. Having had Swami's Darshan we were returning to Trichirapalli from where we were to emplane to reach our home in Colombo.

At Trichirapalli, in the Hotel where we stayed, my daughter began re-packing her baggage, when some metallic objects fell on the ground. On picking up the two pieces we observed that they were a pair of small silver paadugas about 2 inches or so in length with the words "BABA" engraved on them. None of us had ever purchased them. We could not explain how the paadugas could have appeared in the travelling bag, but I was convinced that it should be the work of Swami. Upon returning home we left the paadugas in a small silver tray by the foot stool of Swami in our shrine room. A day or two later a message appeared to say that hence forth we should commence paaduga poojas as well and it should be conducted every month. It was then that we had confirmation that the paadugas were a gift from Swami. We were overcome by deep sense of emotion and were very thankful to Bhagawan for the opportunity given to commence paaduga poojas.

50 *Bhagawan and myself*

How does one get about conducting paaduga poojas was the next question on our mind. I knew precious little of the procedure involved, though I had been following the paaduga pooja at the Sindhi center in Colombo where the pooja precedes the weekly bajan on Thursdays. This pooja is conducted by Mr. Ratnavadivel, the priest at the center. It appeared to me to be a long drawn out procedure and was done so piously and meticulously by Mr. Ratnavadivel. Although I knew there were many mantras to be recited and abishekas to be performed I was clueless of the mantras, the order in which they should be recited and the order in which the abisheka material should be used during the ritual ablution of the paadugas. The compassionate Lord came to our rescue. He wrote the order of the mantras to be repeated and the abisheka material and also referred us to a page of a book in which these and other matters concerning paaduga worship were spelt out in detail. This book is given to all devotees who attend at the centre. Delighted at having received instructions from the Lord, we decided to have the first paaduga pooja in our home. Swami even told us the names of the few devotees whom we should invite for the occasion.

These small paadugas were sufficient for our purpose. However, on one of our visit to the office of the Paaduga Trust in Madurai we purchased a slightly larger pair of paadugas which had been blessed by Swami.

The first paaduga pooja was time consuming and was held on the 23rd of March, 2002. The Sanskrit slokas were unfamiliar to me and then constantly referring to the book took time. Nevertheless I was quite satisfied that the pooja went on well. Swami had also instructed that prior to commencing the pooja the Gayatri mantra should be repeated 108 times. After the first paaduga pooja, we discovered that the small urn of water left in front of the picture of Gayatri had turned milky! In the new Testament water had turned into wine, in this instance the water turned into milk. I know that without Swami's guidance I would have never been able to complete the pooja.

The devotees who partook in the prasada after the pooja confirmed that the milky water had a fragrance and tasted sweet.

I became quite familiar with the slokas when more and more paaduga poojas were conducted. Nevertheless I continued to attend the Paaduga poojas conducted by Mr. Ratnavadivel at the Sindhi center as and when time permitted.

On an occasion when I attended the paaduga pooja at the Sindhi Hall, Mr. Ratnavadivel called me aside after the pooja and gave me a glass bead chain. (Spadika Japa Malai) containing nine glass beads. He mentioned to me that he had bought a few on his last visit to Puttaparthi for distribution among devotees and I happened to be one of the lucky ones to receive one of these chains. This chain was in an envelope titled "Gift of Dharshan" in which there was a note which concluded ".....to whom much is given, from him much will be demanded." Years later in a message as Thought for the day, I realized that the word demanded meant "LOVE" and nothing material.

Renganathan as I mentioned in an earlier chapter, was a regular visitor at our home whenever he came on business matters to Sri Lanka. Renganathan had a queer habit of copying down verbatim all messages which appear on the board even if it did not concern him. For this purpose he never failed to bring along a thick note book and pen which were left on the carpet in the shrine room. If there are any private messages for Renganathan such messages appear in the book itself. The next day Swami wrote on his book chiding him for copying messages meant for others and obliterated those messages from his book with a white ink pen taken from my office table.

We never looked into the messages written in Renganathan's note book, one of the messages as we later learnt from him requested him to purchase a pair of Vishnu paadugas from Madurai Paaduga Trust for this center and bring them along on his next visit to Colombo. There are six types of paadugas viz. golden paaduga, navarathna paaduga, pearl and coral paaduga, Vishnu paaduga,

shakthivel paaduga and Om paaduga. The note which was shown to me later after the paadugas were brought ended with the following ".....don't show this message to R (myself) as he will never allow you to spend money and buy it." – Sai Krishna at work! After much argument between Renganathan and me for having kept the message a secret we settled the issue when Renganathan accepted half the cost of the paadugas from me. Indeed the padugas are beautiful made in silver and copper.

Renganathan told me that amidst all his work he had forgotten swami's message. Two days before his visit to Sri Lanka while casually glancing through the note book in Bombay he remembered that he had an obligation to fulfill, that of purchasing the paadugas sanctified by the touch of the Lord's feet and which were available only at Madurai Paaduga Trust office. It was humanly impossible to obtain the paadugas from a place many hundreds of kilometers away from Bombay at short notice. Renganathan told us later that he had begun to panic. However fortunately for him when he telephoned the Paaduga Trust in Madurai he was informed that the Paadugas were available and that someone known to the chettiar was leaving for Bombay by train on business that night and would arrive next day. This suited fine for Renganathan who lost no time in immediately clinching the deal as his flight was on the day following the arrival of this person from Madurai. Again fears began to envelope him and a train of thoughts had passed through his mind. What if chettiar's friend forgets to bring the paaduga or if the train is delayed in its arrival at Bombay. Everything ended well when Chettiar's friend arrived and paadugas were collected by Renganathan. There could have been no happier person than Renganathan when he flew into Colombo with the Paadugas having accomplished Bhagawan's directive by His Grace.

Renganathan's devotion was such that he placed the Paaduga's on a silver tray and held the tray over his head while moving into the shrine room on his knees to place the Paadugas at the foot of Swami's

chair in our home.

Swami did not stop at merely having brought the Paadugas into our shrine room. He directed that a Paaduga installation *bajan* be conducted the next day. From the date of installation on 25th March 2004 we began conducting monthly Paaduga poojas for the new life size paadugas. These paadugas made of silver and copper had the conch and wheel (*chakra*) embossed on the soles of the paadugas. Permission was given by Swami for devotees to touch the Paadugas only on the date of installation. (See rear cover for picture)

The rules of the Paaduga Trust require that the Paadugas should be properly cared for with poojas conducted daily or at regular intervals. Every year recipients of the Paadugas world over assemble at Kulwant Hall with the Paadugas and the Paadugas are blessed by Swami once again so that they are recharged, with divine cosmic rays. It is on record that there are over 4000 paadugas in circulation and that prior to their being given away to recipients the paadugas had been consecrated by His touch.

The rules of the Trust also require that when a recipient of the Paadugas is to be away from his home, for long periods of time, the Paadugas should be taken with him and poojas conducted at whichever place he is in.

In June 2005, when we were out of the country for three weeks we took the Paaduga's along with us. More so as we intended visiting Puttaparthi. We thought that it was a splendid opportunity to have the paadugas blessed by Swami so that it is recharged by His divine eyes. We were badly disappointed when the Administrator in the Ashram whom we spoke with told us that Swami does not any more bless paadugas. We then had to be contented with having the Paadugas in our room in the Ashram and offer flowers to them daily. It was just a few days before we left, Swami wrote on a piece of paper lying on the table in the room with a pen "I will bless the Paadugas". We were puzzled as to how Swami would bless the

Paadugas. One afternoon a day or two prior to our leaving Prasanthi Nilayam we observed a heap of holy ash on the Paadugas and the Paadugas were oozing with honey. The honey had wet both Paadugas and had flowed on to the tray. It immediately occurred to us that this was Swami who had blessed the Paadugas and in inexplicable joy we offered our humble pranams to Him. There was also a Sri Lankan lady devotee known to us staying in the same block and we invited her to share the holy prasada Swami has bestowed. Tears welled in her eyes for she was fully aware of our disappointment when we were refused permission to take the paadugas into the hall to be blessed by Swami.

In August of the same year we had the good fortune to be in Puttaparthi for the Ganesh chaturthi festival and we were again amazed to find on this occasion the paadugas which we had taken blessed with sugar candy cubes and honey. In February 2007, we had witnessed the paadugas we took being covered with almonds and raisins at Puttaparthi.

We decided that these incidents should be kept under wraps. We were not going to reveal these events to all. The remaining portion of the sugar candy, holy ash, honey and almonds were carefully collected in small containers and brought to Sri Lanka for distribution among a few devotees who usually attend the Paaduga pooja at home with strict warning that they should not disclose these incidents to anyone else. Swami it is known has on many occasions withdrawn benefits he had conferred on his devotees when the recipient publicizes gifts he or she has received. The Lord has said **"It is in your nature that if you experienced even a minor miracle You just indulge in publicity. Do not do that."**

We returned to Sri Lanka and began cleaning the house and polishing the brassware in preparation for the *bajan* on the next day. Whenever we return from India Swami never fails to remind us to purchase a garland for Him for use at the very next *Bajan*. If Renganathan was planning to come to Sri Lanka, Swami would direct

me to telephone him, the moment Renganathan phoned to say that he was coming, to enable him to bring a garland and sweet meats.

Close upon the commencement of the *bajan*, on the next day there was a message and that was for me to go public by relating to the devotees after the *bajan* about Swami blessing the *paadugas* at Puttaparti. This was a bolt from the blues. I pleaded with Swami that I be excused from doing so as some devotees would doubt the story since there was no proof of the sugar candy cubes and honey on the *paadugas*. Lo and behold, minutes before the *bajan* commenced there appeared lumps of holy ash on the *paadugas* and enough honey flowed from them in the tray which we distributed to all devotees who were present. Some of Swami's devotees have experienced the materialization of holy ash, *amrit*, *kumkum* sandal wood paste and medicines appearing on the *paadugas*. These appearances are said to indicate the presence of Bhagawan.

During our visit to India in 2005, we also had the occasion to be in Madurai for a few days. We took the opportunity to attend the *bajan* at 'Ananda Nilayam' – a hall beautifully designed and constructed for conducting *sai* activities by the late Shri Srinivasan Chettiar, the President of the Sai Paaduga Trust in Madurai. This building stands on a sprawling extent of land adjoining Chettiar's House and this area of Madurai itself is called Sri Sathiya Sai Nagar. Swami never fails to stop over to visit this center on his annual journey to Kodaikanal in summer of each year. Infact when the building was ceremoniously opened it was Swami who was invited to do so. Chettiar made a pair of silver *paaduga* at the bottom of the stage for Swami to stand on the *paaduga* during the inauguration ceremony while Chettiar poured a tray of gold and silver pieces on to Swami's feet. This incident is captured beautifully in celluloid and is the picture we had, purchased at Madurai from which Swami materializes *kumkum* in our home.

Our visit to Ananda Nilayam was for two purposes. One was to obtain a copy of the book listing out the rules and regulation and

the procedure involved in conducting *paaduga* poojas which we were told was available for sale at the *paaduga* Trust office for those who have obtained *paaduga* from the Trust. The other reason was to meet Chettiar's son personally and renew our acquaintances. Fortunately for us Chettiar's son was in Madurai and was quite happy to see us. It was then that he mentioned to us that there was going to be the usual Sunday *bajan* at Ananda Nilayam that evening and invited us to attend the same. He went on to say that on the day following and for four days thereafter the highest of Priests from Kerala (Namboothigal) well versed in the Vedas have been invited to commence a 'Homam' ceremony to invoke blessings of the Divinity for Swami to commence walking amongst His devotees after His injury to His hips. Chettiar addressed the gathering of Devotees in the Hall at the end of the *bajan* and reminded them that Devotees all over the world pleaded with Swami for solving their problems, taking over their illnesses and curing them. He concluded his speech by saying that time has now come for us devotees to repay Swami by praying to the divinity for His quick recovery. Swami has said that by His powers He could cure His body but that action of His would appear to be selfish to the devotees who themselves were suffering from illnesses.

I had been yearning to have *Paada Darshan* from Swami. During all the years I had visited Puttaparti, I had thought to myself whether Swami would give me that *Dharshan* if not at Puttaparthi at least at White Field. On the fifth day following our arrival at White Field after the *bajan* in a sudden turn of events He decided that He must be wheeled in the chair amongst His devotees. In the previous four days we were in the hall Swami never moved from the seat. He was sitting on until after *aarthi* when He was wheeled away slowly along the aisle back to His home. Fortunately for me I had occupied a place along the aisle and was the third in the row. I had a splendid chance to have *paada dharshan* as His lotus feet were not covered by the dress He was wearing, when He was being wheeled along the very aisle I was seated by. The very next day I had come late and there was an ineffable silence as Swami entered the hall. The devotees

assembled in the hall were all in pin drop silence some were in meditation and others had their hands clasped in prayer. On looking around quickly I could not find a vantage point to have a good dharshan. The sevadal directed me to occupy a small place along the aisle. I had lost hope of having one more dharshan of Swami's feet or even having a look at Swami from up close. Then the unexpected happened that was without rational explanation. Swami having been on the stage till towards the end of the bajan and just as I was beginning to lose hope, whispered something to the students who sat by His chair. The next minute the students wheeled Swami along the aisle, Swami began taking letters and notes from some devotees while gesturing to others. My joy knew no bounds and once again I experienced the bliss of having seen His feet when He stopped close to where I was seated to receive letters from devotees

It was on Guru Poornima day in 2002 Swami made His first physical presence felt. That morning everything was being done for the bajan in the evening at home. We had gone out of the room and when we returned after sometime we found on the floor in the shrine room before His chair a pair of life size foot prints in holy ash. This was a spectacular manifestation. The message on the board stated that they were Swami's Foot prints and we could enjoy the bliss of having Paada Namaskar. We covered the foot prints with a piece of transparent polythene sheet and sealed the edges down with seal tape so that the foot prints do not get erased off. However much I had taken precautions to maintain the foot prints, due to lapse of time, the polythene paper gathered dust inside and the foot prints became obliterated as devotees began placing flowers on it and touching them. We were contemplating as to how we were going to maintain the Foot prints anymore. In 2004 on the day prior to Guru Poornima Swami had again placed a set of fresh foot prints close to the ones He had placed earlier. This gave us immense joy and this time we had sealed the foot prints with better material. In addition to the foot prints Swami also placed on the floor near His chair an imprint of His right hand also in holy ash. This too we covered so that devotees can have

the benefit of worshipping them.

In the year 2005, before leaving for Puttaparthi we had news that Swami had suddenly left for White Field. Not knowing how to ascertain Swami's whereabouts we were in two minds as to whether we should undertake the pilgrimage. We had been to White Field only once for the early morning dharshan on an earlier occasion. On that occasion I had the fortune of Swami coming near a group of devotees seated beside me. I vividly recall that on that occasion His eyes fell on all of us and then a gentle smile passed over His lips.

Coming back to the main story, we were concerned as to whether we could obtain accommodation in the ashram at White Field. We were informed by devotees that unlike at Puttaparthi accommodation was limited at White Field Ashram. We did not have even the telephone numbers of the Ashram to ascertain the information. It was when we were reflecting on this issue that both General inquiries Numbers of Puttaparthi and White Field appeared on the board. It was a pleasant surprise but we knew that it was all Swami's play. We phoned White Field Ashram on arrival at Bangalore and were informed that Swami was at White Field.

We were at Bangalore bus stand from 8.00 a.m. but there was no sign of any bus to White Field even though the information we gathered was that the bus would arrive at bay No.17. We began to lose patience and our feelings were at the lowest. I was just about to ventilate my discomfort when at last at 11.00 a.m. a bus did arrive. The journey from Bangalore took us an hour or so. Having come near the Ashram the driver decided to stop nearly half a kilometer away and asked us to alight and walk to the Ashram, as the road was under repairs and the bus could not proceed any further. With all the baggage we trudged along in the hot summer noon day sun. After a long wait at the Registration office in the Ashram we were given a room. The building in which we were given the room was far away from the ashram and was situated in a lonely spot. We decided to look elsewhere for accommodation as we had another lady devotee friend

who had accompanied us and who had to be found accommodation with ladies who were staying together. This was causing us anxiety as it was also getting dark. I began to lament and told my family that “while the bus driver had let us down half way, this Person had let us down fully.” by not giving us accommodation. The lady devotee who was with us has had previous experience of having stayed at White Field. She suggested that we meet the Administration Officer and explain our predicament. The allocation of rooms take place after the bajan and having been warned that after the bajan there would be a rush to the office, we decided to wait outside the office so that we could be the first in the queue. The Administration Officer whom we met at Gokulam provided us a room in the ashram and also located three ladies who were willing to share a room with our friend. When we entered the room I was dumbfounded by what I saw written in holy ash on the mirror in the bath. The message read “the bus driver let me down.....and this Person let me down.....- “fill in the blanks” signed Baba! I never felt so ashamed in all my life before. I prayed fervently and went down on my knees with utter humility to beg pardon from Swami. Swami has said that He is a silent listener of every conversation and so it was.

This was not the end of the story. Our lady devotee friend having found accommodation left her personal belongings, bags and all near the door of the room she was to share, as the door was locked. I told her it was not safe to leave the bags unattended and volunteered to stay by while she went down to locate the other occupants of the room and obtain the key to the room. She was adamant that I need not trouble myself in keeping watch over the baggage and requested me to join her to locate the three other to be companions of her room. Soon she returned with the key and told me to go back to my room as she could handle the matter on her own thereafter. No sooner I came back to my room; there was a frantic knock on the door. When I opened the door, there was our friend wailing away that both her baggage had been stolen from the place

she had left them out side the room. For some moments we did not know what we were to do. How were we to help this lady to purchase new clothes and other necessities? I went down to complain to the Security Officers and also inform the authorities. One of the Officers came with us to the first floor on which the room was located. Our friend and I then saw the bag and baggage outside the door just as it had been left! The Officer called me to a side and told me that our friend had perhaps gone to another floor in forgetfulness searching for her bags. But then our friend swore that it was not so, as she had even complained to the occupants of the next room of the loss and they are witness to the loss. Happy that the bags were found I returned to my room. Awaiting me was another message on the mirror in the bathroom which read ‘I wanted to teach her (our friend) a lesson. I took the bags and put them back. I am playful - Baba.’ When coming down the stairs, I recall reading a notice in bold letters on the board at the entrance to this building in the Ashram “Do not leave your Baggage and belongings unattended. We will not be responsible for any loss” it dawned on me that Swami had taught a lesson to this friend of ours for violating a rule of the Ashram!

Swami’s harmless fun and infantile pranks evoked chuckles and smiles among all those present including our friend.

CHAPTER 8

Appearances of Statuettes and Amrith

Swami has often said, '**Miracles are My visiting cards**' and are not products of mystic powers. His divine power brings objects in a moment as He is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. These miracles are intended to plant the seeds of faith in the minds of non-believers. Reading books on Swami alone will not convince people of His divinity. Magicians fool the people to make money and earn a name, but Swami's miracles however, cannot be graded in the same basket. Most of His miracles have been abundantly recorded by devotees around the world.

It was on New Year day on the 14th of April in the year 2003 that Swami told us that He would materialize a statue of Lord Ganesh. As to how and where this was going to happen kept us all excited. We had previously read about Swami's powers to materialize statues but not experienced them. On the morning of New Year's Day we were very busy with preparations and decorations in the shrine room as a large gathering of devotees had expressed their desire to attend the bajan. It later occurred to us that it was this day three years ago that Swami began materializing holy ash in our home. We had not told anyone of Swami's declaration that He would materialize a Ganesh idol that evening.

When decorating the statues of various Hindu Gods on the

altar my daughter was alarmed when she saw what appeared to be a pointed object glistening in the holy ash heap which Swami had materialized. We attempted to check what it was but could not as the rest of the object was buried in the holy ash mound. We made up our mind as curiosity got the better of us to extricate the object. Amazingly this was a saptika Ganesh statuette covered with the holy ash. It was a very beautiful idol and we placed it on a small brass tray for worship by the devotees after the bajan that evening.

In the house of Vijaya, a Madras lady who had settled down in Bombay Swami had materialized so many idols of different Gods, one or two of them as tall as six inches or so, from the holy ash heap also materialized by Swami. We had been to her house for bajans during our stay in Bombay in March 2004 and saw these idols preserved in a glass case. The day before we left Bombay for Puttaparthi, Vijaya called us and gifted a Hiranya garbha Shivalingam made of marble which she said she had been prompted by Swami to give us. This Shivalingam unlike the statuette of Lord Ganesh had no distinctive physical features. It was oval in shape and symbolized the formless divinity. We had also an opportunity of visiting a house in Bombay, the house of Meena. This devotee conducts Gayathri pooja every Friday and she too had a collection of idols which had appeared in the holy ash heap in her house. My daughter was lucky enough to be given a brass statue of sakthi about six inches in height; a beautiful statue intricately carved bringing out every detail.

While we were at Chennai, a friend of ours took us to the home of Shridar. Shridar's parents are very devoted to Swami, and so Shridar and his brother Giri became very staunch devotees of Swami. Giri had the gift of having his wishes transformed into reality. We were told of two incidents by Shridar's mother when we visited their home.

One day Giri had sat in front of a picture of Swami and asked Him for Tirupathi Laddu to be given as Prasadam to the devotees who

would attend the Telugu New Year *bajan* that evening and infact had placed a bowl for the purpose. This wish remained unanswered until Giri once again reminded Swami. The next day eight big *Laddu*'s appeared in the bowl placed at the foot of the idols of Sri Venkadachalapathy and Goddess *Luxshmi*.

In another unconnected incident Giri had asked Swami for His foot print and His palm impression on a piece of white cloth. This prayer was answered by Swami. This reminded us of the request made by the late Sri SriNivasan Chettiar from Swami, to have Swami's foot prints in saffron on a piece of cloth. Swami obliged and the piece of cloth is even today being worshipped by the Chettiar family even though Chettiar had reached Bhagawan's feet long ago. This foot print was the forerunner for Chettiar requesting Swami to grant His blessings so that he could make *paadugas* for the benefit of Swami's devotees.

Swami in His infinite grace had materialized statuettes that have appeared from the holy ash mound in the shrine room of our home. There have been many such idols over the past two years. On the day we had a special *bajan* for Swami for His recovery from His fall in July 2005. Swami materialized a tall statue of Lord Venkateshvara and his consort goddess *Padmavathi*. The devotees who came for the *bajan* that evening were permitted to touch the statues and pray.

We have had idols of Hanuman, Buddha, Virgin Mary, St. Anthony, Mary at St. Lourdes, Rama, Shridi Sai many *Sivalingams*, Madurai Meenachi, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba (bust) including a ten inch tall idol of Sri Rama Pattabishakam which latter appeared on Rama Navami day. A similar beautifully etched statue of Lord Venkateshvara also in silver appeared on Deepavali Day 2004. Swami leaves instructions to us if He wanted anyone of the devotees to be a recipient of the statues. He knows what idol should be given to whom and when. I would deviate here to relate three incidents.

Thava from Malaysia was unknown to us. My cousin in Malaysia also a devotee of Swami telephoned me one day and wished to know whether Thava and this family who were going to stay in Colombo for a few days prior to going to Puttaparthi could visit our shrine room. Swami had given them the usual permission with the additional direction that Thava should be given an idol of Lord Ganesh. After a family *bajan* they had, I handed him the Ganesh idol. I could see that his eyes were starry with tears of joy. It was then that he disclosed that back in Malaysia he conducts *Abishekam* for a large statue of Lord Ganesh every month as lord Ganesh was his favorite god. There used to be a very good attendance of devotees at these *Abishekams*. So, Swami had given the correct *Ishta Devatha* idol to Thava.

Bavani, is a devotee who has a talent for singing *bajan* numbers beautifully. We had not known her before until she was introduced to us by another devotee. Then, Swami gave her permission to attend our home *bajans*. Bavani told us that she had sung before Swami at Puttaparthi and received His blessings. After her first *bajan* at our home Swami directed us to give her a silver idol of Lord Ganesh. This devotee was more than delighted to receive a gift of a statuette of the very God for whom she loves to sing at *bajans*. In all a total of about sixty five idols have been given to Swami's devotees on His directions. Idols keep on appearing on important dates and Swami's idol production line has been never ending! On the little silver tray on the table are the balances of the idols which have appeared from the holy ash. As the number of idols increased a shelf had to be made along the wall to accommodate them.

Viji had been a devotee of Swami for a very short period. However, despite the position she held in the Administrative service of the Government of Sri Lanka, she found time amidst all her official engagements to attend to the duties assigned to her by Swami. She was very duty conscious and so Swami wanted me to gift to her a statuette of Hanuman. It dawned on me that Hanuman was duty

conscious to his Lord Rama.

A message just prior to the Buddha purnima day in the year 2006 read that statuettes would now begin falling from the main picture of Swami in the shrine room. During the bajan on Buddha purnima day a statuette of the Happy Buddha of Thailand fell into the tray of prasadam with a thud. Many devotees who witnessed this event were able to worship the statuette after the bajan. More statuettes mainly of Lord Ganesh in different postures have fallen from this picture thereafter. These statuettes are made of exquisite pieces of some kind of metal. They are neither bronze nor silver.

There are many idols of coral black stone, marble, quartz (Saptika), silver and copper, some studded with semi precious stones, on the shelf.

Besides materializing statuettes Swami has also materialized a number of precious and semi precious stones, be it ruby, moonstone, garnet, and turquoise of different colours, sizes and hues. Even in the case of the stones, some devotees whom He considers prone to disease and accidents, Swami directed in messages that they should be given a particular stone out of which they would need to make a ring or some piece of jewellery and wear them for protection as a talisman.

Swami began materilizing amrith and honey from one of His pictures in the shrine room. The amrith flowed from His mouth and He would give us prior warning that honey or amrith will flow from His picture. Once this signal is given a small glass bowl is placed under the picture to collect the nectar for distribution to the devotees after the bajan. The bowl would get full and there would be enough for everyone but never too much. The amrith has a different taste, mostly medicinal and this has been confirmed by devotees who come here. In Edmonton, in Canada in the house of a devotee, Luxshmi, honey and amirth oozed from the paadugas continuously and when she visited us she mentioned this and showed us photographs of this

miracle. She conducts weekly bajans and these bajans are attended by the local people, Sri Lankans and Indians.

Swami materialized a Hanuman statue for me as I was prone to accidents. This statue together with a bust size sticker of swami which was also given to me was to be kept permanently in my car as directed by Him to ward off against car accidents and personal disasters.

On Sivarathri Day in February 2004, as usual, we had the bajan which was well attended. The bajans are not held overnight, as, if we did we would be disturbing the neighbourhood hence the singing of the bajans end by 8.30 p.m. Some devotees wished to stay right through the night and partake in the Abishekam at our home.

Immediately after the bajan was over that Sivarathri night we discovered in the holy ash heap, while performing Aarthi, what appeared to be a shiny object partly covered by the holy ash. I extricated this object while some devotees gathered round me and discovered that it was a Sivalingam. The Sivalingam was placed with a few flowers on a brass tray to be seen by the devotees who came for our bajans. The next morning before the final Abishekam the message on the board stated that the Sivalingam was materialized by Swami. When the devotees present saw the Lingam there was a wave of emotion among them and they were permitted to touch the Sivalingam and worship.

When I commenced writing this book, at a casual gathering of our family, I told them I was lazy to write, and said that if a stenographer could take down what I dictated, it would be much quicker and would eliminate the delay caused by manually writing out the book. A day or two later there appeared a message on the board which merely indicated that the Ganesh statue which was appearing in the holy ash was for me. It was more than a surprise when I took the idol out, for I noted that it was the idol of Lord Ganesh holding a broken tusk in one hand and the ola leaf on the other. This was an

amazing display of Swami's power. I prayed to Swami to prompt the various incidents narrated in this book for me to write out the book in a continuous manner. Laziness was no more and I had allocated time everyday to continue writing the incidents as they flowed into my mind naturally as though some force was behind me prompting me to complete this book. Right through my writing the book I had Swami's inspiration and the book was undoubtedly written by Swami's will.

The story I now relate is of a lady who has not been a devotee but had heard about Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba from her friend Ramani. Ramani was attending the bajans at our home until she was appointed to the mahila group at the prime Sai Center in Colombo. She then ceased attending our bajans due to lack of time. Ramani's friend Kumu had undergone severe hardships. She had expressed her desire to visit our shrine room when Ramani had spoken to her about Swami's teachings. Ramani, accompanied Kumu when Swami had given permission for Kumu to enter His Shrine room.

Kumu had brought with her a small statuette of Lord Ganesh made of metal. This statuette, she had kept away from her mother seeing it as her mother was a devout Buddhist and was against Kumu worshipping any deity. Kumu had wished that the idol of Ganesh would be blessed by Swami, and left it near the paadugas in our shrine room. This statuette was the favourite of her daughter who would not part with it as she had been clutching to the statuette at every examination she appeared for and had come out with flying colours when the results were announced.

When it was time for Kumu to go home, she had gone into the shrine room to take leave from Swami and found the statuette she had left on the paadugas missing and in its place was a bigger statuette of Lord Ganesh made of plaster of paris. Though she appeared outwardly delighted, yet within herself she felt sad that her

daughter's favourite statuette had been taken away. Swami by now had written His message that He was giving Kumu's daughter a bigger statuette of Lord Ganesh.

Once on our way back from a large Hanuman Temple in the hill country we deviated to visit a shrine of Swami where a native physician who was a devotee of Swami was conducting bajans on specific days in the week. This physician had been blessed by Swami as one who had lived during the previous Avatars life at Shiridi. Though we were too tired to undertake this visit yet we went along with the request of the others in our company. On our way back I expressed to my daughter some doubt. Sometime later during the journey she opened her purse to take out a pen which I had wanted. She looked frightened as she showed me a beautifully painted metal statue of Shridi Baba lying in her hand bag. For a moment I was dumbfounded for who else could have cleared my doubt.

Instances of appearances of statuettes, honey, amrith and precious stones have not been sporadic and far between in our home. These have occurred in houses of most Sai devotees while they are unnoticed by some. To those who have experienced them, they are evidence of Swami's miraculous powers. With incidents occurring almost daily in our home Swami's miracles have become a matter of routine to us.

A devotee from Canada, Balan, had requested permission to take a few photographs of the shrine room so that he could create a website when he returned to Canada. I had to politely refuse this request as Swami's message on the door was clear in that He had instructed us that no photographs should be taken without His prior permission. However I told him to pray to Swami for permission as he appeared disappointed. The message next day granted him permission to take photographs of the pictures. The message further said that no website should be created as requested by Balan but the CD could be shown strictly within his family. In a similar incident

three years ago, a devotee discreetly clicked a few shots of the shrine room. We never knew about it as it was done immediately after a *bajan* when we had been away for a short while from the shrine room. As she later told us, the next day she had left with her family on holiday. On arriving at her holiday destination she had left all her belongings in her mother's home that night and the family had retired to bed tired after the hectic journey. In the night there had been a burglary and among the things she lost was this camera, film roll and all. When she attended a *bajan* on her return from her holiday, she confessed that she had disobeyed the rules laid down by Swami by not obtaining prior permission and the price she had to pay was the loss of her expensive camera.

We too experienced a similar incident way back in 1996, when Swami had not begun materializing holy ash at our home. We had been to Puttaparthi after spending a day at Bangalore. At Bangalore we had taken some photographs with my mother and there were a couple of shots more to complete the film roll. These last few shots were taken of some exhibits in the museum at Puttaparthi with the permission of the *sevadai* on duty. We were quite contented that we were going to have some rare photographs of the inside of the museum. But that was not to be, for as we gave the roll to the studio for developing, the person in charge of the studio said that the entire film roll was blank! Swami is averse to photography except with His permission. Devotees who had taken photographs without His permission have ended up with loss of their cameras or with spoilt film rolls. We were to regret this more as the film roll contained photos of my mother at Bangalore and these were the last photographs of my mother as a few days later she died in a horrible road accident in Madurai, of this accident I have written in the next chapter of this book.

Another devotee, Hemantha, despite her knowing that Swami had specifically ordered that no photographs should be taken of functions held at our home, suddenly walked into the shrine while the

bajan was in progress and clicked a few photographs and made her exit into the hall to take her seat. After the *bajan* she was waiting on the road to hail an auto taxi to go home as it was dark. During this waiting time an auto taxi came slowing down and having come close enough to her, somebody in the taxi snatched her camera and sped off. This devotee screamed and came into the shrine room, where a number of devotees were meditating and wailed that her camera and hand bag had been snatched. She refused to go home as the camera was a gift that her daughter had received and her daughter not being a devotee of Swami had reluctantly given it to the mother for the purpose of taking photographs on that day. We had to coax her to go home as the family would be searching for her. It was almost 9.00 p.m. when she reluctantly agreed to our taking her home and explaining the loss to her daughter and husband. The moment she mentioned the loss she had a verbal barrage from her daughter and husband. She was ordered by the family never to go for *bajans*. The faith of this lady in Swami even after this incident and even after the family teased her and asked her whether Baba won't find the lost camera did not prevent her from going for *bajans*.

CHAPTER 9

The Fateful Pilgrimage in 1996

First of September 1996 was a Sunday and we were at Madurai in Southern India at the tail end of our visit to India. We decided to attend a *bajan* at a small hall in Madurai. This hall was partly a temporary shed extending beyond a room bordered by a verandah where Swami's pictures were kept. The day was gloomy and it drizzled slightly. There were not more than ten devotees singing *bajan*. At the end of the *bajan* the coordinator spoke a few words. As soon as he concluded his speech the big garland which draped Swami's symbolic chair dropped on the floor. Flowers falling from pictures of Swami is said to be a sign of the presence of Swami. Hence I assumed that this was a good omen. After the *bajan* the devotees lined up to enter the room to worship the two brass *paadugas* embedded in the floor.

The next day second September was a bright sunny day. It was at 7.30 a.m. when the maxi cab arrived at the Hotel to take us on a day's pilgrimage to the ancient temple of Lord Siva at Rameswaram. The trip was arranged by the Hotel and there were thirteen of us in the cab. We left on a journey that was to later prove to be the most horror stricken and fateful journey.

The maxi cab once out of city limits was speeding excessively. The driver of the vehicle was perhaps overstrained and was speeding in an attempt to reach Rameswaram as quickly as possible. About 9.00 a.m. I recalled telling my mother not to fall

asleep lest she loses, grip of the seat in front and falls off her seat. However my mother and I had fallen asleep as with some of the other passengers. Only to be rudely awakened by screams of passengers, from within the cab.

We stood helpless as we saw the cab reeling on its right side wheels towards the lower area off the road. Then there was a loud thud and the cab had come to rest on its wheels after turning turtle twice over and that's all I knew for I had lost consciousness. When I recovered and looked around there was nobody in the cab except my mother and me. My mother appeared to be in deep sleep on the next seat. I called out for her and as she did not respond, I tried to get up but had an excruciating pain around my chest. Through the shattered windows sunlight was pouring in and I could see at distance passengers who were injured being carried into passing vehicles and I saw my wife and daughter also injured waiting for somebody to carry me and my mother out of the bus presuming that some terrible calamity had taken place.

Two passersby hurried into the maxi cab and helped me and carried my mother and placed us in a lorry carrying straw. At the rural hospital the only doctor available attended to the injuries sustained by all the passengers. Due to the extreme pain, I had bouts of fainting. This doctor who examined my mother lying on the stretcher, told us to our shock that my mother was no more. My daughter had a dislocated arm and my wife a bad head injury. Despite my pleading, the post mortem on my mother had to be performed under the law and it was over late evening. The post mortem report revealed that my mother had suffered no injuries but had died instantaneously of shock. Since my mother had passed away all too suddenly, I was absolutely shattered and my mind was immersed in sorrow. We were given basic medical attention and together with all seriously injured passengers were referred to the General Hospital in Madurai. By the time a spare vehicle was arranged by the travel agent it was well past five in the evening and all the injured passengers had gone off very much earlier.

I could not walk for the area around the chest had begun to swell and each time the vehicle jerked on its 80 kilometer journey back to Madurai it gave me immense pain.

We were given only two days by the general hospital authorities at Madurai within which time we were required to produce the death certificate from the hospital where the autopsy was performed. If within the two days the certificate was not produced the body would be disposed of by the hospital. What we had in hand was only the autopsy report as the issuance of the death certificate would take time.

Back at the Hotel in Madurai, after leaving my mother's body at the General Hospital mortuary, the Hotel Doctor strapped me tight around my chest in plaster, and attended on my daughter and wife. We had decided not to admit ourselves at the General Hospital Madurai as we had plenty of matters to attend to now.

We had not carried with us the telephone numbers of my siblings for we had forgotten to bring with us the little diary. Fortunately my daughter remembered the telephone number of a friend of hers in Sri Lanka whom we telephoned and requested her to go to my relatives house and get them to phone my siblings living in Canada and the U.K.

We received the phone messages of the siblings on the third day after the accident while we remained holed up in the Hotel unable to move about and with no proper medical care. Then from nowhere somebody came introducing himself as having been sent through a source in Madras on the request of my brother-in-law in England and volunteered to help us in every way. He, Ashok a proprietor for large business concerns in Madurai took us to a private Hospital and the x-ray report disclosed that I had fractures in thirteen places in the ribs, a compound fracture of the wrist and two fingers. New medical attention was given to all three of us by a leading orthopedic surgeon. In the next few days prior to the funeral and coming of my siblings

from abroad, I had to move about being helped by the Hotel staff to attend to the preliminaries of arranging for the funeral while Ashok and his wife looked after us. Each movement was very painful but there was nobody else who could attend to all this. It was Swami who helped me to bear the pain and sent people unknown to us to help us in every way.

In the meantime my maternal uncle who lives in Sri Lanka having heard of the tragedy had been able to obtain the Indian visa from the High Commission immediately upon the submission of his application even though the visa counters had been closed for the day. The issuances of visas normally take three days.

There is only one airline flying between Colombo and Trichirapalli and reservations have to be made weeks ahead due to the heavy passenger traffic. My uncle by some miracle was able to obtain the last two seats available on that flight.

His coming greatly relieved the mental trauma I was undergoing with no help. It was by divine grace of Swami that this help was forthcoming.

The funeral was over and prior to returning to Sri Lanka, I searched for the key to the house, which was in my mother's handbag. On opening her bag my eyes fell on a neatly sealed envelope addressed to Swami. I opened the envelope and the note inside was that of my mother pleading with Swami to grant her an "early and peaceful death". This note had been written by her at the commencement of our visit to India when we were at Puttaparthi for two days. Indeed Swami having known the contents of the letter and known that her end was a few days ahead had not taken the envelope containing the note at Puttaparthi.

Swami had given my mother painless death instantaneously without her having suffered.

In the days thereafter many incidents occurred which could

not be brushed aside as coincidences. We felt the hand of Swami guiding us in our medical needs and helping us to sort out matters. By the grace of Swami we recovered from our injuries. I had taken nearly three months of leave from office to be working from home due to the nature of my injuries; such leave would not have been permitted to any employee in the public sector. However, for many months thereafter I could not sit cross-legged on the ground during bajans and had to be accommodated on a chair.

This was the time when my faith began to falter. I could not understand why Swami took her away. I used to think about this horrible tragedy and felt dejected at times. The bizarre scene never left my mind. It was during this period that Swami built confidence in me. When one day a year or so later, there appeared the following words on my mother's wardrobe "your mum is in Puttaparthi as a small girl". These words rebuilt my dwindling trust in Swami. This is a lesson I learnt and that is to accept Swami's resolve without a murmur for He is creator, protector and destroyer. We are all His creations and instruments in His hands and must return to Him. "We act in His divine play according to His resolve, and not even a blade of grass will move without His resolve."

Of Humor

Swami chastises and punishes to reform those whom He loves. He does also have a sense of humour and pranks which evoke ripples of laughter among His devotees, and at times also keeps His devotees tensed. We have faced many anxious moments. There had been several instances when we found the switch key of the car or money missing from the places where we had left them. These often occur when we are in a hurry to be leaving for some place. Then everybody in the house begin blaming each other scurrying around the house searching for the missing article. After He has put us through the mill for sometime, messages would appear on the board stating where the missing items could be located. Swami's innocent and childish behavior overshadows the anxiety that He has put us through on such occasions.

I have read an article attributed to Swami. Once Swami was speaking to a large gathering and He drew an example of a Guru and His disciple.

The Guru and the disciple, the latter being somewhat a fool, were moving from one village to another. The Guru having dumped all his belongings including items of furniture and cooking utensils in the disciples cart sat in the cart himself. The cart was going up a winding road rather lazily, occasionally falling into potholes. Each time the cart fell into a pothole some of the items of the Guru in the cart used to fall off. The disciple of course being a fool made no effort to collect the fallen items and put them back into the cart,

instead he proceeded on his journey. The Guru having been napping in the cart was awakened rudely when a cooking utensil fell off making a din. He shouted at his disciple when he learnt that similar items had fallen off the cart on the journey and the disciple had not stopped to pick them up and put them back in the cart. He admonished the disciple, and told him that whatever that fell off had to be collected and put back into the cart. Having given him instructions the Guru once more had fallen asleep. The disciple from then onwards put back the falling items into the cart. At one stage the poor bull drawing the cart dropped dung, the disciple immediately jumped off the cart, collected the dung and threw it back into the cart! The Guru rudely awakened by the offensive smell of the dung lashed out at the disciple and told him that dung was not an item that should have been put back into the cart. The poor disciple pleaded that the Guru's instructions were to put back all items that fell off. The Guru decided it was now time to give the disciple an inventory of items in the cart that should be put back should they fall off during the journey.

Having given the inventory the Guru fell asleep once more while the cart was ambling along. The cart was going up a hill when the Guru fell off the cart with a thud, the disciple carefully checked the list of things to be picked up given by the Guru and failing to find the Guru as an item, proceeded along the journey despite curses and threats by the Guru, who by now had begun running behind the cart. Having caught up with the cart the Guru demanded to know why the disciple did not stop to pick up the Guru when he fell off the cart. The disciple of course showed him the list and defended himself.

On another occasion a devotee returning home on holiday from abroad and not previously known to us having heard from a mutual friend about our home and the Leelas performed by Swami at this center decided to visit our shrine room. Swami has a sweet tooth and most devotees bring laddus, chocolates and toffees as prasatham for Swami. This lady devotee in all her enthusiasm brought a whole

load of chocolates. Among her offerings were Mars Mini bar chocolates. When the lady had gone away after leaving her offerings in Swami's room we discovered that Swami had a message on the board in the shrine room. The message being that I was to telephone and tell the lady that Swami does not eat eggs! It took us quite a while to figure out what Swami meant. We finally discovered from the wrapper of the chocolates that one of the ingredients in the Mars Mini bar chocolates were eggs! The lady of course quite embarrassed humbly removed the chocolates to be distributed to an orphanage.

On the day prior to the New Year in April 2003, as is usual almost all the shops were closed, except for a super market or two. It was customary in our house to make an offering to Swami of food we partake and on this day, we decided to make some vegetable sandwiches for Swami. The particular super market that was open had only brown bread. Hence we had no choice but to reluctantly make sandwiches out of the brown bread as prasatham. During the course of the day we noted that Swami had a message on the board. The message merely said "I am not diabetic."

Rama, wife of Renganathan whom we have encountered in earlier pages had visited Sri Lanka on two occasions. She is an ardent devotee of Swami. During the period of her stay she made tasty delicious Indian short eats as prasadam for swami on the days we held bajans. Once Rama was making a prasadam and it was made clear to her that she was not to use any spices in her preparation. However while making the prasadam she had surreptitiously attempted to add chillies into the preparation.

Rama had searched for the container with the chillies but the container was nowhere in the kitchen. She then became angry and accused us for having hidden the container. We swore that we had not come into the kitchen at all and hence had no opportunity to hide anything. This incident became a serious issue when Rama's temper flared up. She kept on saying that, that the particular prasadam would be

tastier with chillies. A short while later she thought she saw with the corner of her eye the container hanging on a nail on the kitchen door. She looked again and discovered that it was the container of chillies. The discovery was too late, for the prasadam had been made without chillies. Rama felt shy of her behavior but we had fits of laughter at her expense.

Another devotee left a comb of partly ripened bananas for Swami on a bajan day. After the bajan the message on the board read “I don’t eat green bananas”.

One incident which occurred a year ago deserves to be mentioned. There was a message on the board. The message merely said that someone who called himself a devotee had smuggled into the Ashram, premises in Puttaparthi a ‘forbidden item’ and Swami said He had taken that item away to be left in my home for disposal. We looked around for this item and on discovering it in the corner of another room we could not help but laugh. I needed to get rid of it. In other words I had to find a non devotee to whom the item would be useful and who did not know that I was a devotee of Swami. I visited the home of a gentleman who virtually worships such an item and I decided that he was the most appropriate person to receive the ‘gift’. The plight of the so called devotee who had lost that item in Puttaparthi must have been miserable. Swami knows everything and nobody can pull the wool over His eyes, and this is a message for all devotees.

Mrs. D (name withheld) is a staunch devotee and is a sevadal at the main bajan center which we used to attend in the past. In Swami’s shrine room, once she told us that her son was returning from the U.K. and would bring for Swami His favourite chocolates and edibles. Swami having heard this had a message on the board to say that He was looking forward to receiving the edibles. The son is a non-believer in Swami. Nevertheless, Mrs. D brought a bag of edibles and left them in the shrine room, and having prayed to Swami

she went away. Next morning the message on the board stated that the chocolates had been bought locally though of foreign origin. The message asked us to look at the price sticker on the items which were marked in local currency. Mrs. D was naturally embarrassed and had questioned her son. The son admitted that he had forgotten to buy the items in the U.K. and had remembered it when he landed in Sri Lanka, and on his way home from the airport he had purchased them at a local super market.

Bhagawan’s devotees believe that He is the unseen master of their households and revere and adore Him out of sheer love. Signs of His important grace manifest themselves in most of these homes. Swami is able to perform His miracles anywhere in the world, for He is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent.

C H A P T E R 11

More Incidents after the Appearance of Holy Ash

In a previous chapter I narrated events which occurred prior to the appearance of holy ash at our home. In this chapter I shall narrate more incidents that took place after the appearance of holy ash.

On a hot summer noon, during a peak hour, I was driving my daughter back home from her classes. I was overtaking a huge breakdown truck, which was being dangerously driven, swaying from side to side. The next minute the front fender of the truck struck my vehicle and my vehicle got entangled with the fender of the truck. Neither the truck driver nor his assistant had noticed this as the truck continued to drag my vehicle along side. The pedestrians and other vehicles were seen frantically signaling the driver to stop. The truck driver by now having seen our vehicle being dragged stopped the truck. By this time a large crowd of people had gathered, through this gathering a person promptly extricated us out of our vehicle as the doors of our car could not be opened due to the impact. Having got us safely out he instructed me to examine the licence of the truck driver. To my utter dismay I noted that he was a trainee driver from an area out of the city. This stranger asked us to keep a close watch of the driver lest he runs away while he went to summon the traffic police and returned a while later. Till the traffic police arrived he kept our company and then before I could thank him he went off to the

other side of the road and waved at us and was gone as quickly as he had appeared.

After the police recorded our statements, and that of the witnesses we came home in a taxi rather shaken up and went into the shrine room to thank Swami for having saved us from serious injuries. It was then that I saw a message on the board, which read that it was Swami who had sent “the stranger in the blue shirt” to help us.

How strange and provident that we had been saved from an accident which could have left us maimed or even turned out to be fatal. I could see in this incident in retrospective the hand of Swami who had come in the guise of an unknown gentleman anticipated my predicament and showed me the way to face it.

In the year 2005 we were directed by Swami to celebrate Krishna Jayanthi and Ganesh Chathurthi together by having a special bajan. Ganesh Chathurthi is celebrated on a smaller scale in Sri Lanka unlike in India, where the day is declared a public holiday and the celebration held over a few days. This year Ganesh Chathurthi day fell almost two or three weeks after Krishna Jayanthi.

We were non plussed as for the reason behind this strange direction. A few days later we had an urgent letter from our Lawyer in India, stating that the Judge had summoned us to appear before him in the compensation claim we had filed in the Madurai Courts in India, for injuries suffered in the road accident of which I have referred to in Chapter 9. The date of our appearance in Court was just few days prior to Ganesh Chathurthi day. Swami had known that we would not be in the Island on Ganesh Chathurthi day. This then explains why Swami wanted the Ganesh Chathurthi bajan combined with Krishna Jayanthi celebrations this year prior to our leaving for India.

Our court case in India fortunately was concluded on the 05th of September 2005 itself. We had anticipated that there would be at

least three to four days hearing before the Judge and hence not wanting to take a chance we had confirmed our return flight to Sri Lanka for a date two weeks thereafter. Our Lawyer had also advised us that the dates of inquiry would be spaced out over a period of about ten days due to the back log of other cases pending inquiry. Now we were saddled with what we were to do during the interim period before our return to Sri Lanka. There was no way in which we could advance our return journey, as the airline said there were no cancellation of seats by other passengers till the end of the month. Further there were also passengers on the waiting list as the flights were heavily booked. Nevertheless, we had decided that the first priority was to do the airline confirmation of seats for our return journey to Sri Lanka even at the end of the month. For this purpose we needed to proceed to Chennai, as the airline simply refused to make our bookings over the phone. They wanted our tickets produced. It was wastage of time to go to Chennai just for this purpose from Madurai a distance of over 450 kilometers and a journey that would take us nearly a day. While we were discussing what we should do, somebody at the Hotel told us that the airline had a small office at Madurai airport!

The lady at the counter had a badge on her uniform which indicated her name as Sai Preethi. She obligingly communicated with Chennai giving the references of our tickets and confirmed our return to Sri Lanka on the first available flight leaving Chennai on the 26th of September. We were very happy that the unseen hand of Swami had intervened in our distressed situation and got one big problem out of the way. The surprise was yet to come. When we returned to our room in the Hotel, Swami had already indicated our itinerary for the interim period that we were going to be in India. He directed that we should leave immediately after the case was over on the fifth September itself for Puttaparthi to enable us to witness the Vinayagar Chaturthi celebrations on the 07th of September. It had been our cherished desire, as we had never been in Puttaparthi for any of the celebrations, and were thankful to Swami for the opportunity given to us.

A train of thoughts crossed my mind while we were journeying to Puttaparthi. What if all the accommodation at Puttaparthi was full with the arrival of an array of foreign devotees. The alternative would be to find accommodation outside the Ashram till vacancies arose within.

As the coach reached the Puttaparthi bus terminus, we observed a large gathering of devotees outside the main gate and our hearts sank. How were we going to find accommodation in the ashram? We made up our minds to face the worst scenario and reciting Swami's Mantra requested the Foreign Devotees Registration office for a room. The Officer thought for a while and then he said there were only two rooms, in the N3 block and asked us whether we would like to take one of them. In that situation tired after a journey of nearly four hours from Bangalore, we quickly accepted the offer and to our surprise found the room most comfortable on entering it.

Back at Kulwant Hall after a shower and change we were able to witness a number of floats and chariots carrying Lord Ganesh in different postures gaily decorated prepared by Swami's students, enter the Hall one by one through the Ganesh gate entrance to the ashram. It seemed that there was a competition among the students to produce the best float. As each float passed Swami to the accompaniment of musical instruments, Swami seated in His chair blessed the students who brought the float before Him. We were quite happy that though we could not witness any of Swami's birthday celebrations yet we had been able to see the Ganesh Chathuthi festival.

Time had come for us to leave Puttaparthi. Though parting was painful we bid Swami Goodbye. We had ample faith that Swami will never leave us. We reached Bangalore from Puttaparthi. We had a whole lot of baggage and it became my task to carry them out of the coach. The auto taxi drivers in Bangalore mostly converse in Kannada language, but only a handful could either speak and

understand Tamil or English. Compounding the problem was that the auto taxi stands were located some distance away from the coach terminal, and were not permitted to enter the coach terminal. With so many baggages to carry, we were awaiting a chance to signal a taxi from that distance. We could see the auto taxis all lined up but no taxi driver caught my signal. Just as I was getting restless, I heard somebody behind me saying 'auto' I turned around and saw a middle aged man in brown uniform and he appeared to be humble and he repeated some words in Kannada language and the only word I could understand was "taxi". Assuming that he wanted to take us in a taxi I asked him in English the fare to the hotel, which he seemed to understand. Having agreed to the fare he picked up our baggage and walked towards the taxi and he was very pleasant in his ways. I asked him through the Hotel reception officer who could speak Kannada language, whether he could come back to the hotel and take us to the private coach office to enable us to make a booking for travel next day to Madurai. When he returned he brought with him the agent for the particular coach company, which saved me the time and fare, I would have to pay by going to the agent's office.

Train and bus reservations need to be made days in advance for long distance journeys in India. Here I was asking late in the evening for three seats in a very popular coach service for the next day. I felt that it was going to be a negative answer from the agent. To our surprise the agent said that there were only four seats available, three of which we immediately reserved for ourselves. After the agent went I spoke to the auto taxi driver through the hotel reception asking him whether he could come next morning to take us to the coach station which he agreed. Some of these agents are up to no good for they are known to give bogus travel tickets, or tickets which are not valid for a particular day or time for which it is required. Having paid the full fare fears developed in my mind and I kept asking the auto taxi driver whether the agent was genuine. It was then that he said on his own volition that he is a Sai devotee and

raising both his hands pointing to the heavens "I will be responsible" and proceeded to give his name as Patel and contact cell phone number. Even after his assurances I was doubtful. However the next morning he was at the hotel reception at the appointed time to take us to the coach station. Having thanked him and paid him extra money as a gift we boarded the coach to make our journey to Madurai. We strongly believed that it was Swami who sent this man to help us. My memory goes back to another similar incident which occurred about three years previously. We had alighted from the coach at the Bangalore bus station. It was dark and we were looking around for somebody to take us to a hotel. There were many porters who were clamoring to carry the baggage and were menacingly pushing each other in an attempt to carry the bags. Then somebody appeared through the crowd and said his name was Babu and picked up our baggage even before we could request him. The other porters retreated. Nevertheless we became more frightened now. He asked us to follow him while he walked briskly in front. On the way he spoke nothing, but suddenly asked us whether we were going to see Sai Baba. An year later on our next visit to Puttaparthi it was the same Babu who recognized us and helped us with our baggage.

After our return to Chennai from Madurai we wished to pay homage at the Shridi Sai Baba temple in Mylapore. We were waiting on the kerb to hail an auto taxi. An auto taxi proceeding in the opposite direction suddenly turned course and halted near us and the driver asked us where we needed to go, we had never hailed him. The manner, in which the taxi drivers speak, the Tamil language is not quite the same as the Sri Lankan way of speaking the language. I tried my best to tell him where we wished to go but he did not seem to understand. While speaking to him my eyes fell on a Shridi Sai sticker on the windscreen of the auto taxi. I pointed out to the picture and explained and then he understood where we wanted to go. I was amazed when I gathered from his conversation that he and his family are long time devotees of Shridi Sai and knew exactly where the

temple was in Mylapore. On reaching the temple he gave us every direction and accompanied us through the temple explaining every detail, and what offerings should be made. Having worshipped at the temple he drove us back to the Hotel. When I asked him for the fare he said that he would be satisfied with Rs.100/-. I thought I heard him wrong, and decided to pay him Rs.250/= which I thought was reasonable and which he reluctantly accepted. Some of my friends whom I met later told me that a return trip to the temple from where we had commenced our journey should cost at least Rs.300/-

Kumu of whom mention had been made elsewhere in this book was never a devotee of Swami, though she respected Swami. Ramani of whom I have also referred elsewhere in this book was a close friend of Kumu. Kumu's close relative was afflicted with a disease, which the doctors had warned could be fatal. The patient was in a bad way and Kumu was depressed. Ramani had off and on mentioned to Kumu of Swami's miraculous cures and so Kumu though a Buddhist by religion made a request to visit our home once again. She took some holy ash to be applied to the sick patient. A few days later she phoned to say that the patient was recovering. Weeks later the patient was discharged from hospital and was recuperating at his home. The trust and faith she began building up in Swami made the patient's recovery quick.

A few days prior to the Navarathri celebrations in 2003 Swami's Chair cover was changed and the shrine room was being readied for the celebrations. There was a bajan to take place in the evening and my daughter who went into the shrine room for some purpose came out shrieking that she saw a snake slide down from Swami's chair and disappear through the window. She appeared startled for sometime. We saw no trace of the snake but on looking at the floor we observed zig zag traces of holy ash dust identical to the slithering movements of a snake when it moves over sand. Some devotees who came for the bajan that evening who saw the markings on the floor said that the markings were that of the movement of a

snake. Swami has said that He could appear in any form. The message on the board read that it was He who had come in the form of a snake.

At 'Ananda Nilyam' – the Sai Centre at Madurai, Srinivasan Chettiar's son once addressed the devotees after a bajan at that center which we also attended. In the course of his speech he referred to a story where a young unmarried woman had been suffering from a serious heart ailment. This woman's mother had taken her to a number of doctors and the medical opinion was that she needed to be urgently operated on if she were to live. The mother could not afford the expenses involved in a surgical operation. She therefore went to every temple praying for her daughter's recovery. Time was passing and her daughter's condition was becoming worse. Sadly she resigned herself to fate. At this time somebody told her of the miracles performed by Swami. She decided to visit Puttaparthi to obtain Swami's blessings but was not successful in meeting Swami. At their home the daughter had a separate room and the mother as a practice entered the room to wake the daughter daily in the mornings. One morning although she called out to her daughter, the daughter did not wake up. Unusually she had covered herself with a sheet up to her neck. Fearing the worst, the mother quietly lowered the sheet covering her daughter. What she saw shocked her, for the daughter had a surgical plaster running down from her neck to half way down to her ribs. On looking around she observed a bucket under the bed with cotton swabs soaked in blood. By this time the daughter had woken up and incoherently mentioned that a doctor in orange robes had operated on her.

A similar incident happened at our house. My daughter had been wearing a piece of gold jewellery on her ears. After some weeks, on her return from India she had attempted to remove the earrings but of no avail. We tried all methods of removing the earrings but were unsuccessful. The only alternative was to obtain the services of a jeweller to saw off the stem of the earrings. That afternoon a strange event took place after my daughter had fallen asleep. When she woke

up she saw her earrings carefully removed and kept on the bed. The ears had swabs of cotton wool with slight traces of blood and was smelling of surgical spirits. Infact on the balcony there were further pieces of cotton wool with traces of blood.

On another occasion she lost her gold earrings in the bath. I was convinced that it had gone down the drain. After a search to make sure that it was not anywhere else in the house she felt depressed. I told her that even Swami will not find it for her. In the evening she found the earrings on her pillow. This was an absolute miracle.

It is usual for devotees who visit the shopping complex at Puttaparthi to purchase their requirements. On one such occasion my wife and daughter had admired a rare photograph of Swami in the shopping complex. They had never seen Swami in that posture. It was a very clear picture exhibiting every facial detail. Though they had an urge to buy it for our shrine room yet considering the number of photographs of Swami we had in our shrine room, they decided to forgo their desire. It was a hard decision to make anyway. As they recounted the event later, they were going up to the paying counter when an unknown lady had held my daughter's hand and gave her the very picture my wife and daughter had admired. My daughter declined to take the picture but the lady insisted that she takes the picture and dropped the picture into my daughter's shopping basket, she had also told the paying in counter girl to add the price of the picture to the lady's account. The lady herself had a basket with one or two items that she had chosen to buy. There was no choice but for my daughter to reluctantly take the picture. She had been infact speechless and bewildered. After going through the counter she and my wife looked around for the lady to thank her, but she was missing – nowhere was she in the complex area. When the picture was brought home Swami's directions were that it should be hung in the shrine room. Next day we found that Swami had autographed the picture with the name 'Baba' in holy ash.

I recall another incident, which occurred not long before the incident narrated above. Times for ladies to shop at the Puttaparthi shopping complex is in the morning after the *bajan*. We had been in Puttaparthi in October that year and already the next year's calendars and diaries with Swami's pictures on them were out on sale. My family purchased what was said to be a calendar about 3' by 3' rolled up for convenience of carrying it. When it was unrolled in our room at the ashram, to our bewilderment it was not a calendar but a large bust size photograph of Swami. We stood speechless for it appeared incredible for a calendar to turn into a large photograph. May be Swami wanted us to purchase a large picture of His for the shrine room. It is this picture that we framed and garlanded with orange coloured paper garland which Swami had wanted purchased at Chennai. I have referred to the purchase of this garland in the chapter on Growing Garlands elsewhere in this book.

The 13th of October 2005 remains another dreadful day in my life. It was on this day that Swami wanted us to have the *Dasara* *bajan* at home. On the 12th I had continued bouts of vomiting and by evening was feeling quite uneasy and exhausted and hence decided to see our family doctor. The doctor having diagnosed my condition as food poisoning, saline and antibiotic drips were administered to me, I felt much better. However this was only the tip of the ice berg and the worst was to come the next day.

The *bajan* on the 13th commenced as usual and since I was continuing to vomit from morning, I was feeling bad by *bajan* time. There was no one to whom I could entrust the conducting of the *bajan*. My family decided that after repeating the *Ganesha Mantra*, I should go out of the shrine room and rest in the outer hall while they conducted the *bajan* to the best of their ability. While seated out side my condition began deteriorating, I began to develop fever, followed by perspiration and rigor. I tried covering myself with a sheet but of no avail, the shivering persisted. After the *bajan* a lady devotee who

had been in the medical field saw me and said, that I needed immediate medical treatment as I was now beginning to have blackouts. This lady devotee took me in her car to the closest hospital. The OPD doctor said that there was no room available even in the ICU to administer saline. Having checked my blood pressure he said that sooner I was attended to the better it was. This lady resides close to Apollo hospital and rushed me to that Hospital, where immediate medical attention was given by administering saline and antibiotics. I guessed that the time was close upon midnight and this lady devotee and her husband stayed on to take me and my family home after I was attended to. Having administered five bottles of saline, my blood pressure remained not much different. The doctor had advised my family that I be admitted to a room. While all this conversation was going on, feeling drowsy, I had fallen asleep. There was nobody in that OPD room. I saw a vision of Swami walking slowly down the long well lit and deserted corridor leading to the OPD room. He came up to my bedside waved His hand before He walked away.

A few days prior to my falling ill, a devotee wished to introduce a Dr. Chandrasekaran an Indian specialist working at Apollo Hospital in Colombo who is a Shridi Sai Baba devotee. He had heard about Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and was curious to know more about Him. With Swami's permission this Doctor attended a bajan on the first day during Navarathri celebrations. Before leaving, he said he would attend the next bajan on 'Dasara' day – the tenth day of the Navarathri celebrations, which was also the day I fell badly ill. Swami's message next day was that Dr.Chandrasekaran should come for the Dasara bajan. However since the Doctor had an unexpected number of patients at the Hospital he could not make it for the bajan on Dasara day.

Let me get back to the main story now. On medical advice, my family decided to admit me to a room in the hospital. I was more than surprised when the Doctor on duty said that I will be under the care of Dr. Chandrasekaran. After four days of treatment I was

allowed to go home. That night before retiring to bed I went into the shrine room to pray and saw a message on the board which stated that Swami wanted Dr. Chandrasekaran to come for bajan on Dasara day as He had known that I was to fall sick immediately after the bajan,. Strange are the ways of our Lord who cares for those who have taken refuge in Him, Swami is infinite hence attempting to describe His love is an attempt in futility.

.....and Swami cures my illness

In February of this year (2008) the year in which the final editing of this book was being completed, we journeyed to Puttarparthi.

On the day before we were to return to Sri Lanka, I silently addressed Swami inside as Swami was being wheeled into the hall for the evening Dharshan, and said that we probably will see Him next year and were sad to leave Puttarparthi. That night a message appeared which read that we will come again in August of this year.

In June there was a message directing us that we should obtain the visa for India and attend to the ticketing to be in Puttarparthi by third week of August. I pleaded with Swami that I had to complete some important personal matters and hence will not be able to undertake the pilgrimage.

His reply was stern. He asked me whether He was important or my work was important and that I may not be given another chance. I then asked Swami silently whether the date He had given could be postponed to end of October. Swami indicated that he could make no change in our date of departure and that it 'was all for a reason'. We were therefore obliged to make the pilgrimage in the third week of August 2008.

One morning a few days prior to my leaving for Puttarparthi, there was an unsolicited Email from the Super Specialty Hospital at

Puttarparthi that a Gastroenterology department had been opened by Swami in July this year (2008). This Email was an invitation to me to show myself at that hospital and that I would encounter no problems in regard to admission. How did the Hospital know that I was a patient suffering from Gastritis for them to have sent me this Email. Further I knew no one in the hospital either. Nevertheless I took my medical history file along with me. At Puttarparthi I was told that to enter the Specialty Hospital, the doctors at the General Hospital at Puttarparthi needed to give me a referral. The queue of patients at the General Hospital was frightening. I decided to call it a day and go back to the Ashram. Just then a lady introducing herself as a niece of a devotee of Swamy to a Doctor in our group who had travelled with us from Sri Lanka, came to me and after listening to me requested me to follow her by passing the queue. The next minute I was at the consultation room. The doctor then referred me to the Specialty Hospital. However the day before I was to go to the Specialty Hospital I developed a sore throat. I had to necessarily call off going to the Specialty Hospital and asked for a fresh appointment from the General Hospital. This time again it was the same lady who took me to the same doctor for a fresh appointment.

On the third day I gained admission to the Specialty Hospital. Though I had given various excuses to avoid an endoscopy for nearly eight years at hospitals back home, I felt that I had plenty of courage now, for I recalled Swami's dictum "why fear when I am here".

Doctor Shastri who attended on me said that she worked in a hospital in the same department in the US and built up a lot of courage and confidence in me. Quite contrary to what was told to me by people about the after effects of endoscopy, I found that it was not so at all. She then gave me the report. The fear I had all along was that the report would indicate a terminal illness because I had been suffering from abdominal pains frequently for many years. Instead the biopsy report was normal.

When I came back to the room in the Ashram there was a

message which sent shivers down the spine of our family members. The message read that Swami had taken out two bad patches from my stomach and I was cured of the illness. Swami also left on my bed, a ring embedded with His picture which He said that He had materialized for me.

When I returned home in Sri Lanka I had another Email from Doctor Shastri reading "you are cured by Bhagawan himself. We are instruments. You are out of danger by Swami's grace".

In retrospective I see the long term plan of Swami when He called me to Puttarparthi. This is evident from another Email sent to me by Doctor Shastri who said that she came to the hospital in July this year and was leaving for the USA in the third week of September and that was within the period we were in Puttarparthi.

Swami always says that everything happens in its own time.

Quite often, there has been evidence of charming fragrance of rose spreading in the air all over the house from the shrine room. We found traces of what appeared like somebody having sprinkled water in the shrine room. Sometimes the fragrance of rose was unusually strong. On days I do not sense the fragrance I used to tell my family in lighter vein that Swami perhaps is not in the room. Sooner or later the attractive rose fragrance emanates indicating that He is omnipresent. We have over the years since Swami began performing miracles repeatedly and clearly sniffed the odour of rose, sandalwood and jasmine at times in our house. We have even experienced jasmine or rose fragrance in our car when we travelled about. He makes His presence felt when a very particular perfume odour drifts in the air. Usually after a few minutes the scent disappears as abruptly as it had wafted. Even to date one could experience the fragrance of roses, and jasmines and, some devotees have also experienced this phenomenon in our home. During one of my pilgrimages to Puttarparthi I built up a conversations with a devotee from Mauritius who was seated next to me prior to Swami arriving for Darshan. He has been a long time

devotee and related his experiences of Swami's divine Leelas in his home. In the course of the conversation he said that on the day on which bajans are held in his house quite often fragrance of roses and jasmines waft strongly from the shrine room though it does not last long. Many years later we have begun to experience the same Leela in our home and there must be many homes' world over where Swami is performing similar miracles.

Talking of the fragrances of flowers I am constrained to mention about the taste of the honey and amrith that flow from the picture of Swami in the shrine room. The honey or amrith that flow from the picture of Swami in the shrine room do not appear at all times, but its appearances have always been on special bajan dates. Devotees who have tasted the honey or amrith, the latter being whitish in colour, have commented that it has the flavour of herbs. While the honey is brown in colour and its flavour is that of the usual bee's honey. Although the glass container in which we collected the honey and amrith was small, yet it was enough serve to all the devotees. The appearance of honey now is from a statue of Ganesh on the altar. The flow of honey from this statue seems to be inexhaustible and had not diminished. The honey is being collected in a small silver bowl and given to devotees after each bajan. These are assuring signs of His divine grace manifesting in the form of honey and amrith.

When Swami wants something done He would say it is "all for a purpose or reason". Let me quote swami here who said **"If I say something, there is a reason. If I do something it is with a reason. You should have this implicit trust that there is always a reason for what I say, will and do. You should have confidence in every word of mine"** On many occasions He has directed us to do exactly the opposite of what we were intending to do. Sometimes matters, which need priority in our opinion, have been thwarted by His directions causing utter frustration at that moment. But on the long run it has been our experience that those directions turned out to be more beneficial.

It was the day before Swami's Birthday in the year 2005, my family had gone out to do some last minute shopping and I had to go out to attend to some urgent matter at the same time. When I returned, all at home appeared to be in an excited mood. They then related the cause for their excitement. My wife and daughter had gone into the shrine room for arranging flowers in vases and they found that Swami had while we were away etched His physical form in holy ash on a picture of His paaduga. The holy ash was firmly adhering to the glass of the picture instead of falling off. It is not uncommon for encrustations of viboothi in various forms appearing on Swami's photographs. What I saw in the shrine room was enchanting and beyond description and it was all too extraordinary. We were all awe stricken by the wonderful manifestation of His divine power. This form of Swami in holy ash is so meticulously done in three dimension and a few days later a sticker of Shiridi Baba's bust appeared on the chest of this creation. A small quantity of holy ash, however which had fallen on the ground while Swami was etching His figure was collected by the devotees who came for the bajan on His Birthday.

My brother and his wife were never devotees of Swami although my brother had once been to Puttaparthi for a day at the insistence of my late mother. In February 2006 they were in Sri Lanka on holiday. There was a complete change in their attitude towards Swami and they seemed to have gathered some knowledge of Swami's life. I was cautious not to broach the topic of Swami with them. Just prior to their leaving after the holidays Swami had written a message on the board asking that my sister-in-law be admitted into His room. I was in a quandary how to convey this to her lest she gets offended as she belonged to another faith. Never mind, I thought if any embarrassment is caused, then let it be that Swami wanted it that way and took a bold decision to request her and my brother to come into the shrine room.

I was more than surprised when they consented and that too from my brother who when invited to attend a bajan on the last

occasion he was in Sri Lanka, left his wife at a shopping mall and came for the bajan late and hesitantly stood outside, perhaps to please me. This time around they were curious to know details of the miracles. Strange are the ways of the Lord. He has begun His work of transforming this non-believer to establish faith in him.

We were on the look out for a DVD player so that we could view the CD's on Swami which we used to purchase at the book stall at Puttaparthi. Most devotees who attend our bajans were interested in viewing the film on the life story of Shridi Sai and Parthi Sai. These latter CDs are very rare to get. However a friend of ours loaned us a copy, for the purpose but we had no DVD player to view the CD. I had taken my brother and wife for a sale of electronic items when they were on holiday in Sri Lanka. While my brother and wife were busy with shopping, my daughter and myself spotted some DVD players on display. We were debating whether it was worth buying the item or not. Finally decided not to purchase it. Our interest in the DVD player was not known to my brother, neither had he seen us looking at the DVD players in the sales room nor had we spoken to him about it. A day prior to his leaving Sri Lanka after his holiday, he arrived at home with a very expensive DVD player purchased elsewhere! How did he know of our want? Swami is aware of even the smallest thought of his devotees.

On 'Sankranthi' day (Thai Pongal) in the year 2005, Swami's personal message to us stated that He had brought some water from the Holy River Ganges for us to anoint our heads before bathing. True enough there was a bag of misty looking water near His chair in the shrine room, Swami's message on the board was **"Makara Sankranthi, marks the commencement of the sun's journey to the northern hemisphere i.e. makara raasi and is a day of celebration all over the country. Traditionally this period is considered an auspicious time and the veteran Bishma of Mahabharatha chose to die during this period. Bishma fell to the arrows of Arjuna with**

his boon to choose the time of his death. He waited on a bed of arrows to depart from this world. It is believed that those who die in this period have no rebirth.

Many people take dips in the Holy Ganges River, offering water to the sun God. The dip is said to purify the self. Special prayers are offered as thanks giving for good harvest...."

Sankranthi is essentially a festival for the farmer tribe. A pot of milk is boiled on a hearth and is allowed to spill over as a symbol of plentifulness and the first grains of the newly harvested paddy are put into the boiling milk.

'Thaipoozam' day, in 2006 fell on the 12th of February. Thaipoozam is a day dedicated to the Hindu deity Lord Muruga and is celebrated on a grand scale in all temples of Lord Muruga in South India and Malaysia. In South India, the temple most famous for celebrating Thaipoozam is 'Palani' – a village situated close to the city of Madurai. An Indian devotee whom we had not known earlier came to our home with a bag of theertham (holy water) obtained from the Abhishekam at Palani temple on the Thaipoozam day. This was for distribution among the devotees who would attend the bajan that evening. Before we could thank him he left all too suddenly. We never saw that devotee thereafter.

On the tenth of August 2006 Swami had commenced the Athi Maha Rudra Homam at Puttaparthi. Devotees from all over the world were flocking in at Puttaparthi. The message on the board on the next day read "on the next bajan day Homam ash will appear out of my viboothi heap, distribute it to all the devotees who come for the bajan" Indeed we found a pack of dark coarse ash smelling of herbs in the holy ash heap and a small bag of kumbam water which had been collected after bathing the Lingam on the occasion. Of this water swami said that it had been collected from eleven holy rivers in India namely Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Cauveri, Krishna, Manasaraver (Tibet), Narmatha, Sinthu, Chithravathi, Saraswathi and Vaihavi for we

would never have had the opportunity to taste the waters of these holy rivers in just one sip. Ruvi a devotee who went to Puttaparthi for the occasion, when she returned at the end of the ceremony much to our surprise brought us prasadam given to the devotees at the end of each day's ceremony. This is the invincible power of Baghawan and certainly strengthened our conviction.

Kalyani, whom I had introduced earlier in this book, was another devotee of Swami from the very inception of our commencing bajan programmes. She once wished to keep a tray of laddus for Swami to be distributed to the devotees after the bajans. A few minutes before the bajan commenced one of the laddus in the tray appeared to have been broken and a large piece missing. We looked around and found pieces of laddu sticking onto the mouth of the picture of Swami from which holy ash had appeared. After the bajan when all devotees had gone off, I saw a message on the board which directed that I should go to a certain shop the next day and buy more laddus for the next bajan. We learnt later, on checking with Kalyani, that the shop mentioned is the very place from where she had purchased the laddus on the previous occasion.

Shiridi is a long way off from Bombay and we had taken a night drive with Renganathan family and Poonam their friend. In Shiridi we had purchased a small statue of Shiridi Sai Baba. On arrival in Sri Lanka we noted that the statue had cracked due to poor handling of the baggage at the Airport. Quite depressed I began mending it with glue. We kept this small statue on the altar. After a few weeks we observed that the tray on which the statue stood had accumulated a coarse, deep ash coloured and odourless material similar to the holy ash served at Shiridi. This holy ash is quite unlike the soft and fragrant white holy ash from Puttaparthi. What appeared, as a pinch of Holy ash has over the months become quite a quantity.

One morning as I went into the shrine room there was a sentence on the board which neither of us could understand. It

certainly was not of a language spoken in Sri Lanka. A while later there was a message stating that the sentence on the board was in Telegu. The message further said that Swami wanted to teach a few frequently used Telegu words and phrases to us. That morning there was a sheet of paper on my table with the following Telegu words and their English meanings!

Dhanyavaadaalu	(Thank you)
Awunu	(Yes)
Vaddhu	(No)
Naaku neellu kaavaali	(I want water)
Ekkada	(Where)
Entadooramu	(How far)
Kshaminchandi	(Sorry)
Daya chesi	(Please)
Sarey	(Ok)

Swami this year performed yet another miracle. He materialized viboothi in pink and cream colour in trays on which Shridi Sai and Shakthi statuettes were kept. My family had seen this phenomenon at 'Sai Sruthi' at Harrow in the U.K. where Mr. Patel and family reside.

On the morning of 20th of April, 2007 Swami said that it was an auspicious day. Late in the noon Swami said that he did not want prasadam served as He was attending His brother's granddaughter's wedding at Puttaparthi. We browsed the Internet which confirmed that the wedding was taking place.

As I heard the news about the wedding I asked Swami in jest whether He would not give us at least some eatables from the wedding lunch that was being served to all devotees at Puttaparthi. I had fallen asleep for a while when I was suddenly awakened by a

divine fragrance in the air. My family too experienced this fragrance. A short while later there was a message which said that my request was granted, and to our bewilderment we saw a small bundle of tamarind rice, almonds and raisins and to cap it all there were two small packets of perfumed areca nut pieces which is usually served to guests after a meal. A message further said that I should share the prasadam with any three devotees and so Vijeya, Nilani and Princy were fortunate to have had the taste of the wedding lunch. Swami had fulfilled the wish, which had passed through my mind.

It was my father's twenty fourth-death anniversary this year. It had fallen upon me annually to perform the religious observances connected to the anniversary ever since he died, as my siblings had been living abroad even prior to his death. They had no facilities to perform the religious observances in those countries. Quite unexpectedly my daughter had to appear for an examination on the date of the anniversary and there was no way in which excuses could be accepted by the examiner. I felt dejected that my duty could not be performed this year. The only option I had was to inform the priests at the Temple to perform the religious observances without myself being present. Having arranged for this with the priest I took my daughter to the examination hall. As the candidates were about to enter the examination hall, there was an announcement on public address system stating that quite unexpectedly the particular examiner had fallen ill and the examination stood postponed. We rushed back to the temple just time before the priest commenced the ceremony, thus it was possible for me to partake in the ceremony.

For the center's sixth anniversary Swami had wanted the shrine room painted, cleaned and curtains changed. To remove all pictures, statues and other items from the room was an arduous task. Nevertheless Swami's request was adhered to. On the date we completed colour washing the room and were about putting the things back into the room there was a message asking us whether an inauguration ceremony could be had. We took this message in lighter

vein but Swami next mentioned the date and time and requested that a ribbon be tied across the door next day. Swami said He would cut the ribbon and enter the room and light the oil lamp. We again were not prepared to take this seriously. Nevertheless in order to ascertain whether it could be true, we tied a ribbon and kept the box of matches alongside the lamp and went about our business. When we returned to the shrine room later in the day what we saw stunned us for the ribbon had been cut and the wick in the oil lamp was burning.

Asoka whom we have encountered in the previous pages had been travelling home after performing service in Swami's room at our home. She had a currency note of a high denomination in her handbag, and some coins. When she opened her bag to pay the bus conductor the fare she found the note missing. She emptied the bag at home and telephoned us to let us know of the loss. The next day the note was on the table in the shrine room with a message stating that the money was pick pocketed by somebody at the bus stand and Swami had in turn "stolen" it from the pick pocket. Asoka was more than thankful to Swami when she took the money back.

Before I conclude this chapter two more outstanding and astounding miracles performed by Swami needs to be related.

The Courier

The big 3'x2' main picture of Swami which is adorned with flowers at bajan times at our center developed a crack on the outer lamination cover near Swami's forehead. This is the very first picture in the shrine room and is nine years old and hence is of sentimental value.

As a consequence of the damage, moisture from the sandalwood paste had oozed into the picture and a discolored patch appeared in the forehead area in Swami's picture.

We were dejected and extremely unhappy but Swami's

message on the board assured us that the patch would dry up before the next day's *bajan*. I tried holding a lighted candle near the moist area to quicken the drying up process. This did not work. Not wanting to take any chances and believing that the stain mark would remain, I telephoned a Sai devotee at Thirunelveli in India who attends our *bajans* during his visits to Sri Lanka and gave him the number displayed on the picture. I requested him to purchase and send me a copy of the picture or bring it along when he next visits Sri Lanka. That ended the matter for the moment.

In the meantime the dark patches on Swami's picture had dried up and there were no stain marks either.

Early morning next day there was a message, which read "I am coming to Sai Malar center today in my *Vishvaroop*a form" I dismissed this as one of Swami's infantile pranks. Though this message was repeated a short while later, I did not take any notice of it.

In the afternoon there was a loud knocking sound on the front door alternating with the ringing of the door chime. On opening the door I saw a courier service deliveryman with a long roll neatly wrapped and addressed to me.

Having signed the courier invoice in acknowledgement, I asked the man the payment to be made as I observed that a tidy sum of Indian Rupees 3000 had been indicated on the invoice. The name of the sender was also nowhere to be seen on the invoice. The man said that all the payments due had been made upfront.

I opened the roll and to my bewilderment found two photographs of Swami identical in size as well to the one that was damaged. Initially I thought that my friend and devotee of Swami in Thirunelveli had sent them. However on looking at the wrapping paper which I had crushed and thrown away, I discovered that T.Renganathan had sent the pictures from his brother in law's address in Chennai. There was also my daughter's mobile phone number

scribbled on the wrapping paper. I had never talked about the damaged picture to anyone except with the devotee from Thirunelveli which is some five hundred kilometers or so south of Chennai. For those who doubt and the researchers, I have preserved the wrapping paper for their verification.

On telephoning Renganathan in Bombay he sounded to be in a state of shock momentarily and said that no one had requested him to buy the picture and the news was a pleasant surprise to him and his wife Rama. I next phoned the devotee at Thirunelveli and before I could speak, he said that he had already purchased the picture and would bring it along when he visits Colombo at the end of the month. Until I phoned he was unaware that I had already received the picture by courier from an unknown sender in Chennai.

It was then that a message appeared stating that it was Swami who having heard our discussions had taken the form of an old man and gone into the only shop in Chennai where this 1979 vintage picture was available. There had been only two copies of this picture in the shop and he had purchased both and sent them to us. The pictures were old was true as I observed that the edges of the pictures were uneven and discolored. Swami's message added that He wanted the pictures to be framed and hung at specific places in this center. This was attended to by His will within the two days grace period He granted.

The Electrician

An old and discarded microphone was about to be thrown away by my daughter. I attempted to check whether it was in working order. No sooner it was connected to the amplifier there was a loud noise and the whole electrical system in the house went off. However on checking the fuse and trip switch they appeared to be in order.

In desperation I telephoned our electrician who had been working for us whenever we encountered electrical problems. He said that he had to report for work elsewhere early that day and regretted

that he could not come. On my pleading with him to at least check what had gone wrong, he agreed to come on his way to his work place for a short while. The next day was a Sunday and all shops would be closed and if any purchasing of electrical replacement had to be done it had to be attended to immediately. In the meantime I checked with my immediate neighbors and they confirmed that they had supply of electricity. So it was only our home that had no supply of electricity.

An hour or so later all too suddenly the lights came on and the fans began to work. We were taken aback. The message on the board read “I had repaired the system by connecting the wires by going into the attic.” The message also said that there were cobwebs and dust on His picture which had collected while He was working in the attic. Indeed there were cobwebs and dust gathered on the picture which we cleaned.

The humorous part of this incident is that the message added that He had been to one of our neighbor’s house “to steal” a piece of wire to repair the connection in our home. True enough the neighbor who had come late to open his office had no supply of electricity and we observed that he had summoned the Electricity Board men to repair the fault. This is an ideal instance of His divine play.

These tender episodes that occur are tokens of His grace. Such incidents strengthen our faith in Swami. These are all Sai miracles and there is no other explanation that is possible. Many of these incidents are so astounding and incredible that I used my discretion not to publish some of them lest they are disbelieved.

Shreya and Barath

When a devotee author had asked Swami whether inanimate objects had a sense of feeling, Swami had said **“There is nothing in this world which has no heart and which is incapable of feeling joy or grief! Only you must have the eye to see, the ear to listen and the heart to respond”**

People who say that inanimate objects do have feelings would be branded as persons on the fringe of lunacy.

As I begin this chapter I am reminded of a discourse given by Professor Anil Kumar of Swami’s University College and also Swami’s official English translator, when he visited Sri Lanka. He in answer to a query from the audience as to why eating non vegetarian food is to be detested as both vegetables and animals have life, the Professor replied that animals have minds but not vegetables.

Navarathiri is a period of nine days dedicated to Shakthi the consort of Lord Shiva in Her three forms as Goddess of valour, wealth and learning. In the year 2002 Swami wanted a ‘Kolu’ set up. Kolu is a display of statuettes and idols of gods, deities and toys, on three or more odd numbered tiers, akin to a flight of steps made of wood erected in the shrine room during the nine days of Navarathri celebrations. A devotee who attends bajan at our home volunteered to loan a doll, a beautiful one, as one of the toy’s on the Kolu. After the celebrations were over we were about to return that doll to the devotee when Swami intervened and directed that He wanted that

particular doll to be in His room. Naturally we were quite taken aback. We did not wish to disobey Swami’s directions but what reason had we to give the devotee for keeping back the doll. Although the devotee came for bajans thereafter and had seen the doll in Swami’s room she never asked for it. On the contrary in lighter vein she remarked that the doll could be left for Swami to play!

Then began the play, I had a direction from Swami that “this child” (referring to the doll), was an orphan from Pini in Switzerland and whether we could look after her. We began to care for ‘her’ as a member of our family from the day Swami said so.

Then one day Swami disclosed that it was He who was in the ‘doll’ and from thence onwards would issue further directions as coming from ‘her’. This disclosure was further reiterated when one day I ignored one of ‘her’ directions and the message that followed read “you know who I am”. The first message was that ‘she’ has **“come to give love and take love.”** We treasured her, and by and by new clothes were made for her, and food (Prasatham) was also served for ‘her’. There was evidence of the food having been eaten by her as we found particles of food sticking to her mouth. We had named her ‘Shreya’ but have been discreet about her existence in the house. Just a handful of devotees knew about her and that too, when one of the lady devotees insisted on taking measurements to make new dresses for ‘her’. We became so fond of her that we took her wherever we went.

On our first pilgrimage to India, after her arrival at our home we came upon a problem. How do we keep the little girl happy while we were away. We decided that it was not safe to take her with us, as the security personnel at the airport would mishandle her. There have been incidents of terrorists using ‘dolls’ to detonate bombs planted in them. So with sadness we have had on two occasions to leave ‘her’ with family friends. While we were away our thoughts and minds have always been about her. Hence we looked forward to the day of our returning to Sri Lanka to bring her back home as the first

priority. As time went on she began playing with us, hiding my car key or money. At the beginning we began accusing each other of being careless with these items. When arguments reach the peak a message would appear on the board “I am playing with you all, I am Bala Krishna, and am three years old, and that the missing items are in the person of ‘Shreya’”. The hidden items are then located in Shreya’s dress.

We could bank on Shreya to find misplaced items, which she had not taken. Swami had helped a tonga driver who had asked for Swami’s help to find his lost horse. Swami had told him that his horse was grazing in the nearby mango grove. Sure enough the tonga driver found his horse in the very place Swami had mentioned.

Because of Shreya’s truant ways, we could not be without her and took a bold decision come what may she must come with us wherever we went even if we had to travel to India. On the first trip to India with her despite our boldness we got cold feet when we saw all baggage’s of passengers including cabin baggages being checked minutely and being questioned by customs authorities.

When our turn came for the customs officer to examine the baggage, surprisingly he went through every baggage of ours but not the cabin baggage in which ‘she’ was kept. Although I showed the carrier bag to him, he gestured to me that it was not necessary.

By the time ‘Shreya’ was about to make her second trip to India she had an addition in the family – another doll which had been lying in the almyrah. We had long forgotten about this ‘doll’. This was a ‘he’ and my daughter got this doll as a birthday present in her fifth year.

Now, Swami began writing that the ‘He’ doll was going to be ‘Shreya’s brother and was named ‘Barath’. Barath was a ‘baby doll’ and had a soother in his mouth. Both Shreya and Barath became inseparable. We experienced their pangs of separation on our second journey to India when we decided to leave Barath behind in the house.

On our return from India, as we opened the door, there was Barath seated on the Settee. This touched us so much that thereafter both Shreya and Barath had to travel everywhere we went. Barath was not playing truant but Sherya was becoming more interesting and those few devotees who had seen her commented that she is no ordinary ‘doll’.

Swami told us that ‘her’ birthday should be celebrated on the 22nd of November and ‘Barath’s’ birthday on the 14th of January. Swami was very keen that these two birthdays should be celebrated with a bajan. This was a brain teasing order. How were we going to celebrate a birthday where the devotees would wonder why the birthday child was not present? We overcame this hurdle by saying that these two children were children of a devotee in Bombay whom we had known for years.

Swami takes on many forms, His appearance as the ‘he’ and ‘she’ in this household, we verily believed is two of such forms. There is an incident which I had read in a book written by a devotee of Shridi Baba which would be relevant to mention here.

The incident was that of a person who was an ardent devotee of Shridi Sai Baba. It was customary of this devotee to make prasadam for Shridi Sai Baba and He always looked forward to eating this devotee’s prasadam. On a particular day after this devotee had prepared the prasadam and had been away in another part of his house, a dog came and consumed part of the prasadam. The devotee who saw this was furious that the Lord’s food was being eaten by a dog. He hit the dog with a stick and drove it away.

When the devotee took freshly made prasadam to Shridi Sai, He did not eat it. The devotee inquired from Swami the reason for him not eating the food that day. The reply he received was that He (Swami) came in the form of a dog to eat the prasadam and the devotee had driven Him away.

Whatever Swami directs as those needed by Shreya and Barath are attended to the best of our ability, for we were more than convinced that Swami was speaking through ‘Him’ and ‘Her’ - More through “Her” than through “Him”.

I vividly recollect an incident when I fell ill my family mentioned to me that “she” was found in Swami’s shrine room.

Swami has on a number of occasions directed us to teach ‘her’ Nursery rhymes and teach her mathematical tables. Though at first this seemed silly but as time went by the nursery rhymes used to appear on the board and when a part of the rhyme was forgotten by her, a few dots would appear followed by a question “what next?” There were several questions over a period of time that Swami asked us as being asked by Shreya. The answers for most of these questions were not within our knowledge. One question that was asked was as to why the banana leaf has a midrib. The answer to this question was not known to any of us. The answer given by Swami as coming from ‘Shreya’ was that Hanuman became an ardent devotee of Rama. Once when Lakshmana was injured and was dying, Rama commanded Hanuman the monkey God to fetch for him a certain herb that grows in Himalayan hills. Hanuman unable to locate the particular herb lifted the whole hill (‘Sanjeevi’ hill) and brought it to Rama to enable Rama to identify the correct herb. Lakshmana was thus saved from death. Rama embraced Hanuman for his devotion and declared that like all his other brothers; Hanuman was also a brother to him. Both of them then sat for a meal served on a banana leaf and the mid rib of the leaf was created so that each one could eat separately on either side of the leaf. Then there was the question as to why devotees of Hanuman garland him with betel leaves. The answer to this too was unknown to us. Shreya’s answer was that when Seetha (Rama’s consort) was kept imprisoned under the Asoka tree in Sri Lanka, Hanuman went in search of her. Hanuman found her and told her that he had come as a messenger from Rama and in proof showed her Rama’s ring. Seetha was overjoyed and garlanded Hanuman with the

betel leaf garland that she was making at that time repeating the name of her Lord Rama.

I was amazed when certain questions were asked of my ancestors whom I had never seen as they had been dead long before I was born, but had heard of them from my parents. Bhagawan acting through Shreya named the ancestors. It is no wonder then that Swami has said **“I know all of you through and through”**. To Swami the Paramathman we are all old acquaintances and He knows the past, present and future lives of every being.

Renganathan of whom I have spoken about earlier once gave his mobile phone to us as he had an extra one. However Swami having watched this transaction directed Renganathan to purchase a new phone in India with many more features and bring it when he next comes to Sri Lanka. I was mumbling within myself as to why an extra phone was necessary and the message on that day read that He needed a mobile phone. This was a strange request, for, whom was Swami going to speak with on the phone. We thought it to be a practical joke and dismissed the request. But it was not so easily dismissed for Swami had without our knowledge directed Renganathan that He needed the phone. This note to Renganathan was written in Renganathan’s note book. I dissuaded Renganathan not to buy one but Renganathan was not relenting. The matter ended there when Renganathan went back to Bombay a few days later. It was customary for Renganathan to phone us prior to every visit of his to Sri Lanka to let him know what we require for the shrine room. Often Swami would say that He wants incense sticks and ghee based sweets, for He said that in His previous avatar as Krishna He was fond of eating dairy based products. These were all directions appearing on the board.

Back to the story of the mobile phone, when Renganathan phoned us, he told us that he will buy the particular phone that Swami had wanted. I was furious and told him that on my last visit to India I had already bought a phone for Swami. When Renganathan came he

placed the phone in Swami's shrine room. This was then the third mobile phone in our home.

Swami taught me a lesson that it is He who decides and His will prevails. After all who are we to override His directives.

A month or two passed and the play began thereafter. Messages under the name Shreya appeared on the mobile phone. Some of the messages were very humorous. "Where shall we go this evening, I can't be under house arrest," "I want to visit a devotee patient take me." These messages became more and more frequent.

Shreya in one of her messages disclosed that Padmavathi (consort of Lord Narayan) was her mother and extracted promises from us to take her to a particular Vishnu temple in Colombo. Most often we noticed holy ash on her forehead on returning from the temple.

Swami besides His divine power to materialize objects could also locate lost or stolen items. Let me deviate here to mention three instances which we have experienced.

I had a cheque written in favour of the Water Board office which I had lost in that office. The first step was to inform my Bank not to honour the cheque if it was presented for payment without reference to me. Having got the problem out of the way we were attending to our other work when the message on the phone said that Shreya had gone to the Water Board office and flicked the cheque from the pocket of an employee who had found the cheque lying on the ground. The cheque was left on my office table!

In another event a family member had lost her National Identity Card which had been in her hand bag. This was a matter which needed priority as she could not go anywhere without the Identity Card. Procedure in obtaining a new one is not only cumbersome but time consuming. The chill that ran down my spine was when I realized that the Identity Card could be used by somebody

for criminal purposes. Just then the mobile phone rang. The message said that the National Identity Card had been taken by her from the possession of an old lady who was behind a member of our family in a queue and it could be returned provided Shreya was taken to a particular Vishnu Temple which we used to attend.

At the Christmas bajans some devotees bring little gifts to be given out to small children. Even the children in the children's home are given stationery during Christmas. This year Shreya asked me what Santa Claus would give her as a gift. I purchased a drawing book and a box of watercolours. Shreya did some good paintings on the book. Swami Himself is a good artist and had done the beautiful painting of Lord Krishna standing near a cow at Gokulam at Puttaparthi. This we learnt from the speaker at one of the induction lectures to foreign devotees at Puttaparthi. Then one day she took the brush meant for painting wood work which was in the cupboard and sent us a message asking whether she could be taken to the sea side to do a painting. When she discovered that we were amused, she sent another message to say that she would use the brush to do some Chinese art work on our house wall. This is childish frolic and innocent fun by Swami. There is never a day where she does not send us phone messages. These messages keep us quite busy for we know it is Swami who is performing all these acts.

As time went on Shreya and Barath became good friends. We have found that "she" would use Barath's shoulders to stand on top and peep out through the window. This happens when the ice cream van goes down the lane or the snake charmer blows the pipes. On the day Tsunami devastated the Coast of Sri Lanka, we were discussing the tragedy while watching the Television. Shreya was standing on top of the office table carrying Barath and holding a bag of her clothes. She had probably got so frightened that she was ready to run away with her belongings.

Once I called her by another name and the phone message she sent was, **"You can call me by any name and I would respond."**

Swami himself has said that god has a thousand names and would come to our help if we genuinely and lovingly call him by any name. There is a striking similarity between what Shreya said and what Swami had said.

We wanted to test her and told her that lots of children of her age were going to school and that she also needs to go to school. Her reply was “no school, Sai Malar Centre, (our Bajan center) closed for vacation”. Then we gave her a test on mathematical tables we were aghast when she scored one hundred percent marks by getting all the answers correct.

A devotee’s father had passed away and when the devotee invited us for the thirtieth day memorial prayer and the bajan, Shreya first wished to know whether infants could also come for the “dead mans lunch.” She was taken but remained in the car. When we returned home she sent us a message saying that the curries were spicy and hot and in fact they had been hot and spicy.

‘She’ often asks us to tell her stories and on one occasion I told her the story of ‘Alibaba and the Forty Thieves’. I did not anticipate that she would interrupt me but she did and asked me “what Baba did you say?” It dawned on me what she had meant. I quickly told her Alibaba was a thief.

Ramani whose name I have mentioned earlier was making a lovely cake for Swami’s Birthday for which she had brought a tube of glitter paint for decorating purposes. When Ramani had completed making the cake, she had packed up all her utensils and the remaining tube of glitter paints and went back home. The next day we discovered the tube of glitter paint among Shreya’s bag of stationary. Shreya sent a message that she robbed the paint from Ramani aunty for her paintings!

Shreya one day sent us a message asking us whether we mind if she brought another “baby sister” into the house. She continued to

say that the “sister” was a plaything of a little French girl and the family was leaving the island. This family had wanted to give the “sister” to their maid. Though we agreed to her request, we knew that this was one of her pranks. Later in the day we found the small “baby sister” standing beside Shreya on the settee. In a similar incident recently Sherya said that another “baby sister” has been abandoned and taking sympathy on her, would wish to bring her to our home. This “baby sister” she said was plumpy and her name was Janice. This time around we were cautious not to say yes, but remained mum. When we came home we were aghast and lost for words when we found a chubby looking “baby sister” sleeping on the bed.

Nothing happens without the knowledge of our Lord. There is no proof required but for the fact that it is the divine hand of Swami that is pervading at all times.

If we were to disclose all the wonderful experiences we have had with Shreya and Barath I will need to write a special book on them.

Shreya and Barath will perform many more plays in the days to come, if one remembers that Swami may be anywhere in His physical form but He is always everywhere in His subtle form for He is omnipresent.

Once in a thought for the day the message on the board at our home read **Love all. Show love to all objects. They too have life. Do you all love dolls? I once called a Swiss family to my interview room. They had a daughter whose age was two. She had two small dolls in her hand. I looked towards the little girl and asked her do you love dolls? The little girl smiled and said, yes Swami. The little girl then gave the two dolls to me as if I would like to play with them. I only picked up the doll whose hair had come off and had a broken nose. At once the Swiss couple asked me, Swami why do you love this particular doll most?**

I replied no one will love this doll because it is broken. Most people who are, and objects which are hated by others, I LOVE THEM MOST, not only humans even objects have life.

Love All, Give Love to All”

The message that was on the board as I completed writing this chapter was “We are not for exhibition for anyone who wishes to see us!”

CHAPTER

13

Thought for the Day

In this chapter I quote some of the “Thought for the day”, which have appeared on the board over the years since writings appeared in this house. These thought for the day are read out to the devotees at the end of the bajans. Some devotees copy these messages.

In a few instances there had been some minor mistakes in the spelling of words or placing of punctuation marks so much so the “thought for the day” could not be grasped properly. On an occasion I mentioned to my family that there were mistakes in the thought for the day. Swami’s message was that He was Bala Sai and I may correct the mistakes before I read them out at the bajan.

The ninth of January 2005 was the day on which Hanuman Jayanthi was celebrated with a bajan and on that day the message was **“Hanuman (Anjaneya) was born to Anjana. Hanuman was a mere monkey leader until he met Rama but when Rama gave him the commission to seek Sita that was the day when Rama was installed in his heart as guide and guardian. Hanuman hence became immortal. The names Ramadootha (messenger and servant of Rama) that he earned thereby has made him immortal. You must earn the name ‘Sai Rama dootha.’ Use good and sweet words and examine each act of yours”.**

What amused some devotees at this center on a bajan day was the thought for the day. I had not read it prior to the bajan but on

reading it for the first time I began to realize the depth of it. Whatever Swami says is meant to correct and reform the devotee proceeding on the wrong path. The message read **“You go on decorating yourselves or idols with expensive jewellery, I say that you are hiding the very beauty of yourselves and the idols. Such acts smack of artificiality, be simple, spend your money on service. There are lots of problems to solve in this country. Try to solve these problems by doing seva. Where healthcare, education and medicine are required, participate in these activities. One’s foremost duty is to serve his fellowmen and make them happy. Your life will be redeemed only when you involve yourselves in serving society. This is again true devotion and love for me”**.

On the other hand Swami does not insist on severe austerity, penance and pilgrimages but it is service, sympathy and love that He asks from His devotees.

Like me, there are thousands of devotees who would have been annoyed with Swami for not having granted them an interview or even taken a letter addressed to Him. I was very disappointed that Swami once passed me when we were seated in the hall at Pranshanthi Nilayam and looked over me at somebody behind to take over a letter. I was dejected and thought it was imprudent of me to have come all the way from Sri Lanka. I decided to leave the hall after Swami went into His interview room. Just as I was getting up one of the students commenced the bajan with my favourite bajan number and that compelled me to stay on and listen. Then when I went into my room there was a clear message on the mirror **“Do you know that I have eyes all over and I can see each one of you all.”** Some years later the following message appeared on the board **“Develop Prema towards the Lord, the Parama Prema of which He is the Embodiment. Never give room for doubts and hesitations or for questions. Feast on the Lords Prema. “My troubles have not ended, why? Why is it that He did not speak to me? How is it that I did not get a room for staying here? Why**

did He not call me? why did He not talk or write? Do not think that I do not care for you or that I do not know you. I may not talk to you but do not be under the impression that I have no Prema. As a matter of fact it is to give you the chance of Darshan that I move along the verandha from this room to that room. Whatever I do it is for you, not for me for what is it that can be called mine? ONLY YOU’.

“It is also pertinent to refer to another of thought for the day on yet another bajan date. The message on that occasion read **“I have come to correct the Buddhi, the intellect by various means I have to counsel, help, command, condemn and standing as a friend and well wisher to all so that they may give up evil propensities, recognize the straight path, tread and reach the goal.”**

When Swami had a fall and was advised by His Doctors not to walk about many adversaries criticized Him as being not able to cure Himself. However devotees all over the world prayed for His well being. The thought for the day prior to the bajan during this period was **“you should have strong unwavering faith without even a trace of doubt. Your thoughts, words and deeds must be in harmony with each other. Many devotees who have such strong and steady faith become recipients of my grace. During the month of May (the month during which Swami injured Himself) there were bajans held in every village and country praying that Swami should soon get well and grant them darshan I received lacks of telegrams from devotees wishing for my speedy recovery”**.

Many devotees were anxious and praying within themselves. Their anxiety turned into penance. The power of their penance bestowed good health on me. It is because of their love and devotion that I am hale and hearty I never use my divine powers to cure myself. If I had used it I would have been cured of the suffering in a trice. I don’t have selfish feelings that I should get cured. Everyone should be happy. This is my only desire.”

There have been instances elsewhere bajan singers begin competing with each other for recognition. Some of these instances have turned out to be unpleasant. Novices at singing bajans question lead singers performance and when the novice's turn came to sing a bajan end up by choosing a bajan which was a favourite number of the lead singer. Very often the novice's rendering of that bajan was pathetic. The thought for the day was **“seek your faults and others merits. Seeing others faults is dire sin. Let your whole life be bajan. Believe that god is everywhere at all times and derive comfort, strength and enjoy singing in your heart in His presence, the glory of God. Do you know why you have been given a mouth? Is it to utter all kinds of words? No, it has been given to you, so that you might sing the bajans sweetly with raga, thala and devotion. Not for competition. Sing for Me with pure heart and Love, I will come to you running.”**

Then there was this conversationalist, a lady who claimed that she was a long time devotee of Swami and that almost annually she made a pilgrimage to the abode of our Lord. She was indeed keeping everyone glued to her narrations. A few weeks later the thought for the day which I thought was more by design than otherwise read as follows :-

“You may boast that you had been visiting Puttaparthi for the past twenty years or so or that you have made the place your permanent residence, but unless you follow the lesson I emphasize, that boast is mere empty vanity. If you develop love for all beings in the faith the God resides in all of you, you may be anywhere but your prayers would reach me and my grace will reach you. In my previous body, I told Nana Shaheb that I am in ants, insects and animals besides in all men. When a dog ate all the offerings intended for me, it was declared to have reached me for I had eaten the food in the form of a dog.”

In the year 2006 Swami's Birthday message at this center was **“on the 23rd of November I was born to wipe off all my childrens**

tears. May you all be happy? I bless all of you on this special day.” What a compassionate Lord for forgiving all His devotees for the wrongs they may have knowingly or unknowingly done, sacrificing His life for the well being of His devotees.

We have been conducting paaduga poojas in our home. Quite recently Swami through His grace introduced us to a new way of performing this pooja which is set out in the book “Sri Sai Paaduga pooja Vidhanam.” At the beginning we were wondering whether paaduga poojas were necessary at all since we were conducting bajans at home and were virtually on the verge of giving up the ritual. The thought for the day on Krishna Jayanthi day read **“Krishna was known as the one who used to steal butter from houses. As there were many complaints about this naughty child, Krishna's mother caught hold of Him and asked Him why He was stealing butter from other houses when she was offering so much and threatened to tie Him up to a mortar if He did not give up His bad habit. Krishna smiled and ran away and Yasodha being plump could not run behind Him to catch Him. She was in a fix as to how she could trace Him. The Lord (Krishna) dipped His feet in milk and ran around the house leaving behind a trail of His foot prints. It was then easy for Yasodha to catch the Lord - “by worshipping the Lord's feet you gain a new life.”**

It is Sri Subramaniam Chettiar's son who when speaking on the significance of paadugas said **“Touching the feet of elders and gurus is a part of Indian culture. This ritual is performed by prostrating before God. God's feet are powerful than the body, however paadugas are even more powerful than the feet because the feet carry the body but the paadugas carry the body and the feet.”**

On the fourth anniversary of the installation of Sai paadugas in our home, the thought for the day was very encouraging. He said **“Worshipping god through His feet is an ancient Indian tradition. Installing a pair of paadugas and believing them to be God's feet**

and performing Abishakam, one can burn his or her karma.”

As I had written elsewhere in this book some devotees were critical of the miracles performed by Swami and had begun to doubt them. Some had made offensive remarks at the commencement of Swami’s miracles in this center. The thought for the day prior to a bajan on a later date read **“In the homes of hundreds of devotees, the appearances of lumps of holy ash, and droplets of honey, sandal powder and kumkum on the pictures of deities have led all of you in Anantha. It is not uncommon for foot prints in viboothi to appear in houses to signify me walking in. In Karaikurichchi you can find My foot prints placed in turmeric in a devotees house and holy ash on a picture of a deity in Salem formed in a fantastic way, with two sentences in Tamil “Om Namo Narayana” which is the eight lettered manthram of Vishnu and “Naan irukka bhayam en?” (Why fear when I am here). “In some countries like Australia, in the house of an Indian national named Ramu, I began performing miracles with holy ash appearing on pictures. I have been eating prasadam in that house”** Once a South Indian prasadam was kept for Swami and the family later found that Swami had eaten the prasadam and wiped His hands on the paper serviette, crushed it and thrown it in the room. **“Garlands, which have been placed around my pictures, are growing. Even here I am performing miracles. Embodiments of Love you must realise that Miracles are my visiting cards. So do not experiment.”**

There is a story of a lady devotee who had been attending our bajans. On one occasion one of her friends also a devotee was gifted a statue of Ganesh. This lady devotee had casually remarked that these statues could have been purchased and buried in the holy ash. Months later the thought for the day was **“Manifestations are not mere magic. I manifest japamalas, deities, statues, coins, rings and precious stones in the Holy ash heap. Miracles occur by God’s powers. Some of my devotees think that they can be bought and kept in the Holy ash. No! It is manifested. The**

people who receive these gifts from me should have no doubts. They should have pure minds. They should not talk about these personal gifts to others. They must not show their gifts to others. If they do, the vibration from the gift will be gone away. Faith and doubt cannot exist together.”

The thought for the day on another occasion was **“Most of you would have had a question in mind. “Will Baba transfer His power to somebody? No! There is nothing like the transferring of powers. There is delegation of powers. You are the power. You are powerful! The power in Me is patent while the power in you is latent and hidden. The power in Me is exposed. Therefore there is no need for Me to transfer power, you are the power, you are the God. Suppose you find a rich man begging near the railway station what do you say? He is rich; so why should he beg. Similarly when you are powerful nobody needs to transfer power to you.”**

To those devotees who keep on saying that they have been doing service here and there. The thought for the day was **“God will not ask you when and where you did service, but He will ask with what motive you did it. You may weigh and boast of its quantity (service) but God seeks the quality of the heart”.**

For a long time I have been tormented with a question in my mind whether fasting on religious days was necessary at all. However I had to go along with the family and fast though not to my liking. Reading chapter XXX 111 of Sri Sai Satcharitra years later I found the answer to my question. The author of that book has stated, “Baba never fasted nor did He allow others to do so. The mind of the faster is never at ease. God is not attained on an empty stomach. If there is no moisture of food in the stomach, with what eyes should we see God? with what tongue should we describe His greatness? Therefore neither fasting nor over eating is good”. Thought for the day on that occasion at this center was **“some of you have a habit of fasting on holy days or on Thursdays. A devotee in Shridi’s time had a**

birthday party for his son Pradhan. Pradhan invited his friend for lunch. His friend refused to have lunch because it was a Thursday. In the evening he went to Shridi Baba. Baba called him and asked him why he refused to eat.

The devotee said Swamiji I made a vow and every Thursday I don't eat anything. The devotee also said Swamiji Thursday is a day for Gurus. Baba angrily replied 'you fool did I ask you to keep vows or did I ask you to fast? Leave off fasting and go and have lunch with Pradhan.

By fasting you don't get close to me. By making vows you don't get what you want. I who decides what is needed by you – be patient"

On one of our visits to White Field, I met an Administration Officer of the Ashram. After conversing with him freely, he gave me few papers in which I found quotations from EHV on human values. One of these papers was very interesting and though the Administrative officer wished that these papers be copied and distributed to the devotees who attend our bajan, I had not been able to do so. However, I quote the most interesting one from these papers for the benefit of the devotees of Swami. **"When you ran around the house getting ready, I knew there would be a few minutes for you to stop and say hello, but you were too busy. At one point you had to wait fifteen minutes with nothing to do except sit in a chair. Then I saw you spring to your feet. I thought you wanted to talk to me but you ran to the phone and called a friend to get the latest gossip instead. I watched patiently all day long. With all your activities I guess you were too busy to say anything to me. I noticed that before lunch you looked around, may be you felt embarrassed to talk to me, and may be why you did not bow your head. You glanced three or four tables over and you noticed some of your friends talking to me briefly before they ate, but you did not. That's o.k. there is still more time left and I hope that**

you will talk to me yet. You went home and it seems as if you had lots of things to do. After few of them were done you turned on the T.V. I don't know if you like T.V. or not, just about anything goes there and you spend a lot of time each day in front of it not thinking about anything, just enjoying the show. I waited patiently again as you watched the T.V. and ate your meal, but again you did not talk to me. Bed time I guess you felt too tired. After you said good night to your family you plopped into bed and fell asleep in no time. That's o.k. because you may not realize that I am always there for you. I have got patience more that you will ever know. I even want to teach you how to be patient with others as well. I love you so much that I wait everyday for a nod, prayer or thought or a thankful part of your heart. It is hard to have a one sided conversation. Well, you are getting up once again. Once again I will wait with nothing but love for you. **Hoping that today you will give me some time."** (A letter from God)

A further thought for the day before another bajan read **"Today I am going to advice the women sevadals. Modesty is essential for women. It is her priceless jewel. It is against dharma for a woman to overstep the limits of modesty. Crossing the limits brings about many calamities. The highest duty as laid down in Sai organizations should not be an advantage for her to boss. She should not talk bad of other devotees. She should be away from public gaze. She must be silent. She should not have the ego that she is the only person who can control. She should not fight for positions. Nowadays women are greedier for positions than men. Embodiments of love follow the path of dharma and don't pay attention to worldly things which are not permanent."**

On the topic of service another thought for the day said thus **"My concern is for the poor people. My talks, conversations, interviews with bigwigs are only to reach out to the poor. The**

ignorant and the foolish do not understand that when a top man is called for an interview and assigned some project like providing water to the people, thousands of poor people are being benefited. I do not want your services. I am here to serve you. You don't need to serve me. I am serving you. I have come to serve you. If you serve anyone be convinced that you are serving Me. Whomsoever you serve amounts to service to God Himself.”

In January this year we discussed among ourselves of our having not gone on the annual pilgrimage to Puttaparthi. The next day Swami directed that we should come to Puttaparthi in February. I had a whole load of other work to be attended to which could not be postponed. I pleaded with Swami that we be permitted to come in July. A few days later there was a bajan and the thought for the day read “No one can come to Puttaparthi however accidental it may be without my calling him or her. Once a call comes don't miss it, for you will never get it back”.

In double quick time we had to make all arrangements and leave for Puttaparthi where we had the fortune of witnessing the Ugadi (Telugu New Year) celebrations in the presence of Swami.

CHAPTER 14

“My Life is my message” - Baba

In this chapter I have attempted to highlight the most important teachings of Swami. It would be a Herculean task to compile all of Swami's teachings into a book.

Swami has declared that miracles are His 'visiting cards'. By these astonishing miracles and magnificent manifestations Swami first makes people believe in Him. Reading books on Swami alone does not help to build faith. It is by experiencing miracles that one begins to build faith. Swami's miracles are countless and include those whom He had brought back to life even after they were pronounced clinically dead such as Radhakrishnan, Subbamma and Walter Cowan. It is here that a Biblical quota becomes relevant. **“I am the life and resurrection said the Lord. He that believeth in me though he was dead yet shall he live”.**

Such miracles materializations and manifestations strengthen people's belief in Swami. Then through His teachings He reforms and corrects man to be spiritual. Swami says that the purpose of having been born a human is not to spend life aimlessly and finally perish to be born once again. One is born again and again on earth due to the bad karmic effects acquired by him during previous births. If one aspires not to be born again he has to be doing selfless service during his earthly existence. **“So don't waste time taking several births” -Baba**

To those who are His devotees Swami is a much adored, loved and respected Avatar. He has taken birth to reform those who

have placed faith in His teachings and not to punish them as in His previous Avatar as Kirshna. Swami has said, **“There is only one religion and that is the religion of God. The whole of mankind belongs to one religion – the religion of man. The basic truth in all religions irrespective of country and race is one and the same though the practice and methods of approach may differ. Those who are ignorant of this truth are creating great confusion and chaos by fragmenting divinity” -Baba.** It is man who created individual religions for his convenience and that is the reason why there is so much chaos and fighting between the various followers of different faiths. Wars have been fought from time immemorial over trivial matters based on religious disputes. It is no wonder then that Swami said that all rivers flow into the ocean even though the rivers have different names. What Swami meant by this is that in the end all souls reach the feet of the creator. The souls are not segregated as having been a Christian, Hindu, Buddhist or Mohammedan during their earthly existence.

Swami always tells His devotees to adhere to their religion. Swami's teachings are never an attempt to convert people from one religion to another. In fact, Swami says that by following His teachings, a Hindu becomes a better Hindu, a Buddhist a better Buddhist and a Christian a better Christian. This is evident from the array of international devotees including those from the communist countries who pay homage to a great teacher at Prashanthi Nilayam day in and day out. Most of these devotees are persons of eminence and world leaders.

Swami has said that by following His teachings of adhering to the truth (Sathyam), righteousness (Dharma), peace (Shanthi), love (Prema), nonviolence (Ahimsa) compassion and service, true spirituality springs in the mind of man to promote unity among humans to live and share the joy with one another. All religions preach the above principles. This then is broadly the message that Swami conveys to all mankind.

There are bound to be adversaries who criticize and do not believe in a Guru's teachings. "Lord forgive then they do not know what they do". Even past masters had people who were against them. Jesus Christ was even crucified as one who was spoiling the people by His teachings, and performing miracles, but Christianity did not die with Jesus. There are millions of Christians who still believe in the teachings of Christ.

At this juncture it is best to quote Bhagawan who said **"Bear all and do nothing, hear all and say nothing, give all and take nothing, serve all and be nothing."**

Swami's message to fellow beings is to refrain from eating non-vegetarian food. He preaches to people that it is wrong to kill lesser living beings for the sake of one's livelihood. Swami advocates people to a simple living. His food even now as of then is ragi porridge made of some cereal and His living quarters is said to have the barest minimum furniture. On the other hand Swami does not expect one to practice severe austerity and live the life of a hermit but advises people to follow a down to earth living. Every human as with the other creations has only a certain number of years to live as destined by God. In that short period on earth must man live lavishly? It makes sense to spend part of the wealth he has accumulated on charity to the needy.

"Service to mankind is service to God". This is one of Swami's important preaching. He teaches every individual to render help in whatever way to a fellow being. Swami himself has set examples of such service. Some of these were to construct schemes to provide wholesome water to the poor villages not only in Puttarpathi where people previously had to trek long distances to collect water which was also polluted and unclean. Such clean water supply schemes are now being constructed by Swami in other parts of India. The latest of such schemes is the one to provide water to the city of Chennai in Tamilnaadu and to east and west Godvari districts in the state of Andhra.

Besides Swami also encourages His devotees to perform Narayana seva or feeding of the poor not only in the villages around Puttarpathi but where ever poor people live. There is a large hall (Dharmasala) which has been constructed at Puttarpathi for such service and hundreds of villagers partake in the meals that are served by devotees which opportunity such villagers would not have had in their own little huts. These are village folk who cannot even afford a square meal a day. Swami has said **"To some eating and enjoying their meals is guaranteed. To others receiving even one meal is a miracle"** - Baba

Swami's message in our home on an occasion said that besides conducting bajans we should also conduct saptha bajans twice yearly. He explained that saptha bajans are held consecutively for seven days between appointed hours. On the seventh day the poor should be fed. This we accomplished for some years. Then He directed that. Saptha bajans be replaced by Sathya Narayana Pooja once every month. We were at sea as we did know how this pooja should be organized. Devotees will recall that Swami took birth after His mother Easwaramma consumed the Prasad given to her by her mother in law after she had performed the Sathya Narayana Pooja. Hence this pooja is very significant. Swami said that nine devotee families should be invited for this pooja. A devotee lent us a book listing out the procedure involved in performing this pooja. She told us that the book had been lying in her shrine room for many years. The book itself was in tatters and appeared very exhaustive. Just as we were deliberating Swami indicated to us a shorter form of the pooja which He said would not be time consuming.

Swami says that His concern is for the poor and He interviews the big wigs only to reach out to the poor. When the poor and the destitute are fed the joy on their faces makes the server also happy. Swami's teachings also inspire His devotees the need to follow the five basic precepts of Truth, Right conduct, Peace, Love and Non violence. He considers that by travelling about, going to temples and

places of worship, performing penance is an absolute waste of time. Selfless service to needy will uplift one's spiritual level provided it is done without any expectation or intention. Swami says that by performing service our past karmas are wiped off. Service includes a whole host of activities such as even cleaning hospitals, colour washing school buildings, teaching children and looking after the aged and sick, for no monetary gain or expectation. Service to others Swami says is giving ourselves to Him and this is true for when one serves the poor, he is in fact, serving God.

The constructing of Colleges from the primary classes for boys and girls in the villages and the deemed Universities built at Puttarparthi are outstanding examples of His love to provide education to mankind. The village boys and girls prior to construction of these schools remained illiterate. These Colleges and Universities are open to all students irrespective of their race, religion or caste. Swami has said that the principle should be that a person's caste should be caste of humanity and not of that into which he was born. In these schools and colleges human values are also taught as Swami has said that education is not an end in itself. Education, Swami says should lay the foundation for students to lead life in a meaningful way and not just for the sake of passing exams and obtaining jobs. These human values teach the children duty devotion and humble living. The students who have completed their education in these Universities are shining examples in whatever services they have entered into.

Puttarparthi was a very remote village during Swami's school days and it is said that there were not more than hundred and fifty people or so living in the village. Swami's mother Easwarama who having been aware of the severe hardship and sufferings of the village people requested Swami to have medical facilities for these poor villagers in Puttarparthi itself. The villagers with slender resources had to travel long distances to attend to their medical needs available elsewhere by other means in the absence of public transport. In compliance with His mother's wish, first a general hospital at

Puttarparthi and then super specialty hospitals were constructed at Puttarparthi and at Bangalore. These hospitals are equipped with the most modern equipments and highly qualified and dedicated doctors offer their services free of charge in the medical and surgical services. These specialty hospitals are among the best in the world where every care is taken and provide free medical assistance.

The finances for these humanitarian projects and services are gifts made by devotees voluntarily towards the welfare of the poor and the destitute. The moneys that are given are accumulated in the Sathiya Sai Trust to be spent for the health care, education, social and other services. The essence of the Trust is that no matter how worthy the cause is, no involuntary collection of money is permitted. That explains why Sai Organization around the Globe do not collect money to provide the services.

Pilgrims to Puttarparthi are provided rooms with attached facilities in the Ashram premises when they arrive to have Swami's Dharshan. These rooms in the Ashram have been built with the moneys from the Trust. It is not only the rich devotees but also the not so prosperous that are provided these facilities of comfortable accommodation and food at very nominal rates at the three canteens which cater to the needs of the western and other devotees.

There are millions of Swami's devotees who will never forsake him and they make their annual pilgrimages to their abode of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, not because of the boons that they have received from Him nor for the miraculous cures he has performed on hopeless patients but out of their deep love for Swami. Some have even purchased housing units around the ashram so that they could have His Dharshan daily.

Bhagawan is the embodiment of the Divinity and is here to guide and lead His flock through the ocean of Samsara.

Glossary

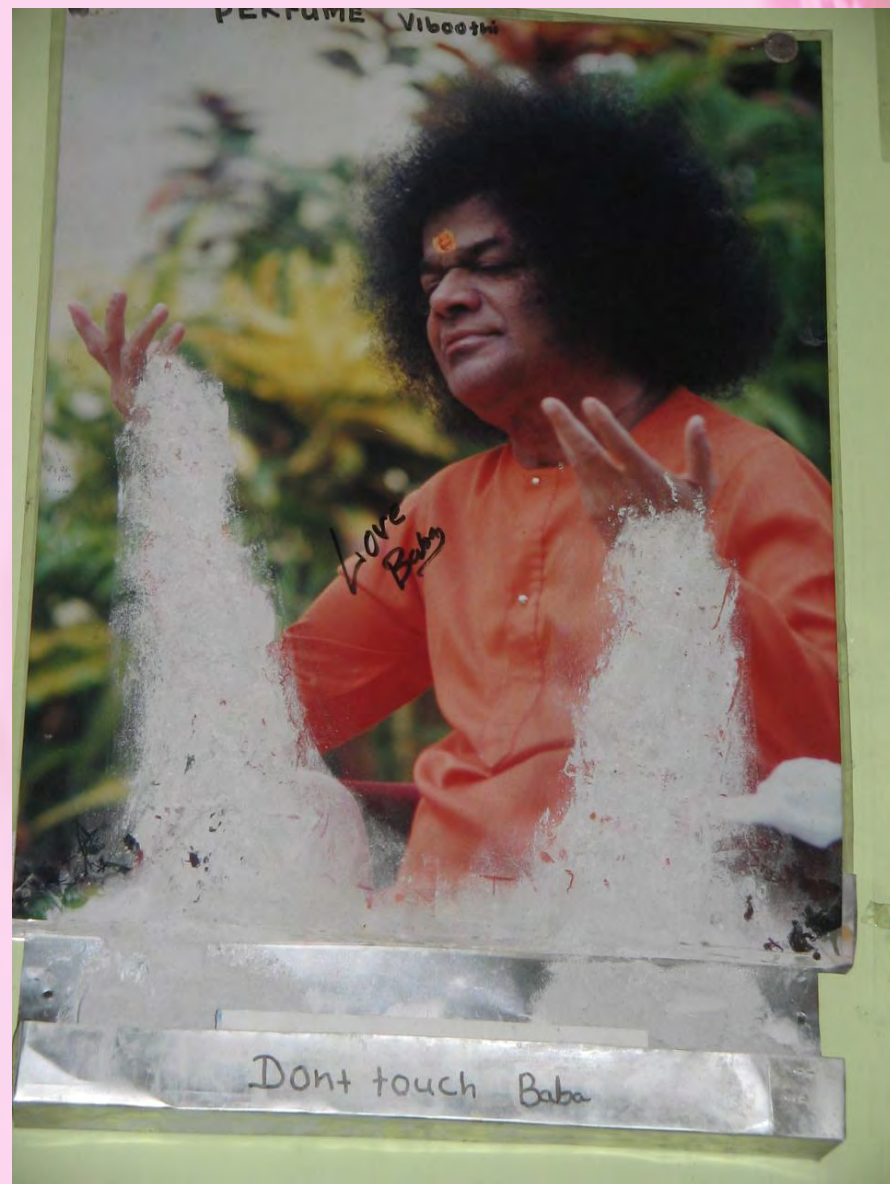
Ashram	- Residence of a Guru
Aarthi	- Showing of Camphor flame
Ashtothra	- The 108 names of the Lord
Abishek	- Anointing and bathing of deities
Amrith	- Nectar
Anantha	- Bliss
Balvikas	- Young Sai aspirants
Baghawan	- Baghawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Buddha poornima	- Lord Buddha's Birthday
Devi	- God's consort
Dasara	- Tenth day of Navarathri festival
Gurupoornima	- Day dedicated for all Gurus
Guru	- Teacher
Ganesh	- Elder child of lord Shiva and Parvathi
Ganesh Charthurthi	- Day on which Lord Ganesh was born
Hiranya Garba Lingam	- Oval shaped Linga made of Marble or Quartz
Ishta Devata	- Favorite Deity
Japa Malai	- Chain of beads used for chanting

Krishna Jayanthi	- Day on which Lord Krishna was born
Kumkum	- Vermillion powder
Leela	- Miracles
Laddu	- Sweet meat favorite of Lord Venkatesha
Lord Murugan	- Six faced God (Son of lord Shiva & Shakthi)
Mantra	- Sacred chanting
Navarathri	- Nine days festival for goddess Shakthi in her three forms as Goddess of Valour, Wealth and Learning
Prasad	- Holy offering (usually food)
Paadugas	- Blessed sandals of the Lord
Pooja	- Worship
Paada Pooja	- Sight of the Holy feet of the Lord.
Shakthi	- Consort of Lord Shiva
Sevadai	- Voluntary worker
Sankranthi or Thai pongal	- Telugu and Tamil words for Harvest festival in mid January
Thirupathi	- Hill abode of lord Vishnu in Andhra Pradesh, India
Tabala	- Drum like musical instrument
Viboothi	- Holy ash
Venkateshwara	- Lord Vishnu

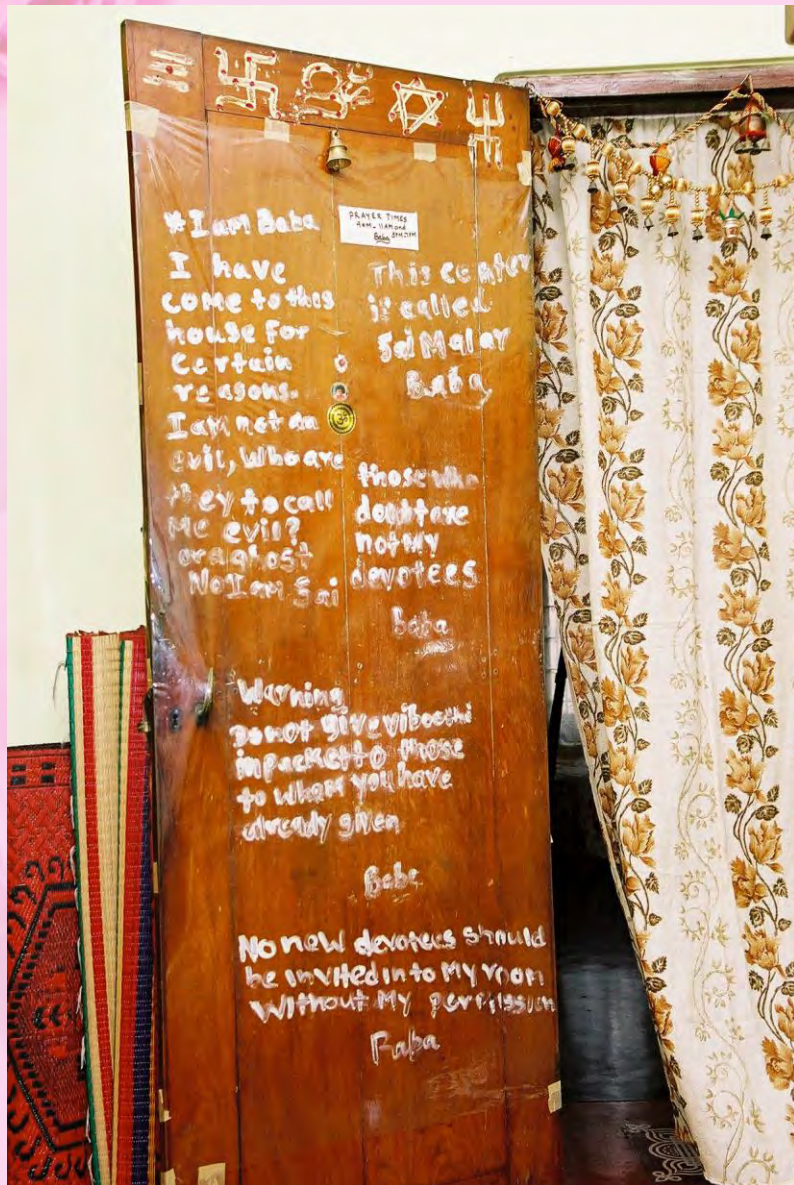


First picture from which Vibhooti materialized during New Year 2000

Chapter : 3 Page :20



**Perfumed Vibhooti
Chapter : 4 Page :21**



The Door where first few messages appeared



Vibhooti, Sandal Wood powder and Kumkum cascading from the coconut in the kumbam vessel
Chapter :5 Page :42



Milk in "Thai Pongal" pot turning grey
Chapter :5 Page:42



Swami showering Kumkum on Subramanian Chattier



Growing Garland, Life size Footprints and Hand imprint in Holy ash in the ground
Chapter:6 Page:48



Some of the idols and statuettes of various Gods and Saints which appeared in the Vibhoothi Heap
Chapter : 8 Page:50



Picture of Swami etched in Vibhooti
Chapter : 11 Page : 69



Picture of Swami from which Amrita used to flow from his mouth Chapter : 8 Page :50



Whenever there is a decline in righteousness and
wickedness is on the ascent,
I shall take birth to set things right from
age to age.

Bagavath Gita